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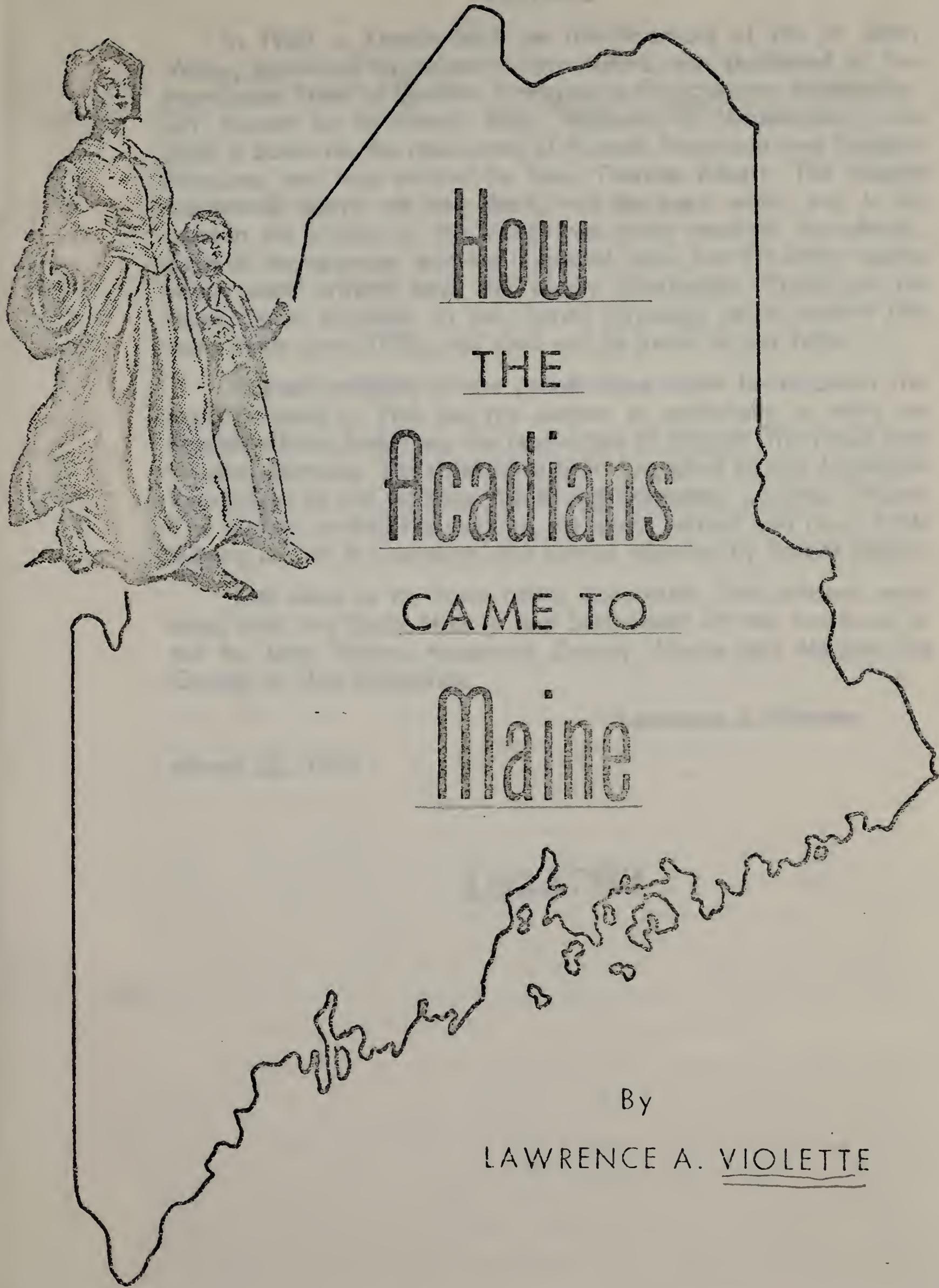
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By

LAWRENCE A. VIOLETTE



## PREFACE

In 1920, a French book on the Acadians of the St. John Valley, sponsored by Acadian contributors, was published by the Franciscan Press of Quebec (Imprimerie Franciscaine Missionnaire). Known by its French title, "Histoire du Madawaska", the book is based on the researches of Patrick Therriault and Prudent Mercure, and was written by Rev. Thomas Albert. The people mentioned above are now dead, and the book which was to be used in the schools of the Valley has never reached the schools. Each of the sponsors received a special copy, but the other copies which were printed were not widely distributed. There are no more copies available in the French language as no reprint has been made since 1920, and shall not be made at any time.

A great majority of the people have never heard about the book or read it. This led the author to undertake to write an English edition based on the researches of Patrick Therriault and Prudent Mercure. The titles have been furnished by the Aroostook Republican of the Caribou Publishing Company, Caribou, Maine. The author limited his work to the exact history and plain facts leaving out all the opinions and diaries reported by Father Albert.

This work is far from being exhaustive. The present work deals with the Early History and Settlement of the Acadians in the St. John Valley, Aroostook County, Maine and Madawaska County in New Brunswick.

Lawrence A. Violette

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## INTRODUCTION

### St. John Valley Depicts Drama Of Early Pioneering

As one comes to Maine for the first time, he cannot boast of having seen the State of Maine until he has seen Aroostook County, and one cannot state that he has seen the entire County until he has seen the St. John Valley. Madawaska in the Valley is the northernmost town in the State of Maine.

The Valley really begins at the boundary line near Grand Falls, N. B., and the hills on either side of the St. John River become more pronounced as one proceeds northwest to Allagash Plantation in Maine. The River passes through Woodstock, Fredericton and St. John, N. B., but there it is known as the St. John River only and there is no real valley as we find here.

Coming from Grand Falls, N. B., and crossing the boundary into Maine, the traveler passes through Hamlin, Van Buren, Grand Isle, Madawaska, Frenchville, Fort Kent, St. John, St. Francis, and Allagash, and here is the end of the road. On the New Brunswick side, the traveler passes through St. Leonard, Siegas, St. Anne of Madawaska, Green River, St. Basil, Edmundston, St. Hilaire, Baker Brook, Clair, St. Francis Ledges, and Connors. Here the end of the trail ends at Glacier Lake.

The highway in New Brunswick follows the River; therefore, the traveler may see all the American towns as he wends his way along the River on the New Brunswick side. Likewise, when the traveler uses the U. S. Highway, he may see all the towns on the New Brunswick side. There is not a dull moment for the traveler from Van Buren to Allagash as the towns are not far apart. As one leaves a town, he sees on both sides of the highway houses rather close together except on the stretch from St. Francis to Allagash which is a wooded area. However, in the Valley the traveler does not have to travel miles and miles on a road through the woods or a highway bordering large farmlands where a sparsely populated area presents more scenic beauty than anything else which tires the traveler after many hours of traveling. There is not enough contrast to keep his attention for long.

Anyone coming from Massachusetts through Kittery and Portland has nearly four hundred miles to travel before he can reach Van Buren through Caribou. Then he has to travel another seventy miles before he can reach Allagash. If he wants to cross to Canada, he may do so at Van Buren, Madawaska, and Fort Kent, as these three Valley towns have each an international bridge connecting Van Buren, Maine and St. Leonard, N. B., Madawaska, Maine and Edmundston, N. B., and Fort Kent, Maine and Clair, N. B.



The Madawaska Territory, so called, included all the present towns on both banks of the St. John River as far west as Lake Temiscouata in the Province of Quebec, and practically all the present counties of Madawaska, York, and Victoria in New Brunswick, and extended as far south as the Aroostook River in northern Maine. This section was renowned for its hard pine trees, therefore New Brunswick and Maine vied for the complete possession of the entire territory until 1842, the year the permanent boundary was fixed.

The people of the Valley are descendants of the Acadians from the land of Evangeline, present Nova Scotia, except that Acadia included all the surrounding lands and was much larger than Nova Scotia.

Acadia might be a contraction of Arcadia, a mountain district in ancient Greece which was famous for its simple, quiet, and contended life. Any region of simple, quiet contentment is called Arcadia. Such was the Acadia of the Acadians.

Originally the Acadians came from Brittany, "La Bretagne," in northern France, and the inhabitants of Brittany were Britons as much as the Britons of England. In fact, Great Britain is "La Grande Bretagne," as compared with simply "La Bretagne" in France.

Although the majority of the first settlers were Britons, there were also many Normans from Normandy in the north of France. They were the old Northmen, or Norsemen, descendants of the Vikings from the Scandinavian Peninsula. There is a relationship between the Normans of France and the Norsemen of Scandinavia, as well as between the Britons of England and the people of northern France.

The people of the St. John Valley are Britons and Normans at the same time. Intermarriage and interrelationship between Normans and Britons were such that it is hard today to say who are Normans and who are Britons. However, we know with certainty that the Valley people have inherited the qualities and faults of both groups, and as a consequence have developed a distinct nationality of people, the Acadians.

In 1066, at the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, won a victory over Harold of England. The Normans ruled England from a period at the end of the last crusade to the Renaissance from 1100 to 1300. Norman French was the language used during the two hundred years of occupation. As a consequence, the English language contains 70% of Latin words which came directly from the Latin, or indirectly through the French.

The Debacle, or "le grand dérangement," took place in



1755. Acadia came under the rule of England in 1710, and the Dominion of Canada in 1760. The Acadians refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the King of England unconditionally, were treated as a stubborn people, a sort of riffraff to be gotten rid of as soon as possible. They were willing to pledge allegiance to England, but they were unwilling to take up arms against the Frenchmen in Cape Breton Island, New Brunswick, and other French settlements in case of a war between England and France.

On a fateful day in 1755, the people were summoned to church by order of Governor Lawrence. Not suspecting any treachery, they went in, and the doors were locked at once. A proclamation was read to the effect that they were prisoners of the King and that they would be deported. All their lands were confiscated, and some of the houses and barns were set on fire. At the point of the bayonet they were ushered to the boats which were waiting for them to take them away and scatter them along the Atlantic Coast. Directions were given on the manner they should behave in the new country to which they were to be taken. Husbands, wives, and children were separated for fear some might venture to come back and settle nearby. They were put on different boats, some being taken to Boston, others to Louisiana, and still others to Bermuda. Those who were fortunate enough to be notified ahead of time fled to Fredericton, others went to the shores of the St. Lawrence. Little by little a new settlement was made near Fredericton, and the Acadians who had fled to the Province of Quebec and those who had been deported to Boston rejoined them there.

In 1785, there was another wave of unrest. The English were pursuing the Acadians again. This time they came to the St. John River Valley and settled in what is now Madawaska, Maine, and Edmundston, N. B. Other settlements were made in Van Buren and St. Leonard, Fort Kent and Clair. The first winter was hard and brought famine and sickness and terribly decimated the population. The Acadians of the Valley suffered the same bitter trials as did the Pilgrims and Puritans who settled in Massachusetts.

The entire territory about the Valley was called Madawaska, an Indian name which means the land of the porcupine. The inhabitants of the Valley did not belong to the United States nor to Canada. They were simply Madawaskans.

Madawaska was rich in hard pines, which the United States and Canada coveted. It was difficult to settle on a boundary line to satisfy Maine and New Brunswick. Several surveys had been made by both parties concerned, but nothing was final. The United States argued that Madawaska belonged to Maine, whereas Canada maintained that it belonged to New Brunswick. The governors of Maine became interested in the people and territory



in northern Maine, as well as Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren. Beginning in 1830 there were debates, exchanges of letters and threats, when finally armies were mobilized, the old military road was built, the Aroostook Road going from Fort Kent through Wallagrass and Eagle Lake being part of that road. Great Britain claimed the whole St. John River, including both banks, and a great part of the territory as far south as Houlton. In 1839, the New Brunswick governor issued a proclamation which amounted to a declaration of war. However, not a shot was fired, and a settlement was finally agreed by arbitration. The Aroostook bloodless war was at an end in 1842. The Blockhouse in Fort Kent is a relic of that war.

Daniel Webster and Lord Ashburton were the arbitrators. They made the St. John River the dividing line between Maine and New Brunswick, from Van Buren to St. Francis, and the St. Francis River the dividing line between the two at St. Francis. The treaty of 1842 is known as the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.

The people of the Valley are accused of speaking a dialect. It is Yankee French more than anything else. However, the educated class, and by this I mean those who have studied French in school long enough to be well-versed in reading, literature, and grammar, speak very good French. Others speak a mixture of French and English, use bad grammar, as others do in their own language, and use old forms of the 17th century, the century of the French settlement in Canada.

The Acadians have inherited two great cultures from two great civilizations, England and France. They are proud of this dual nationality in culture. Though the people of the Valley dislike to be called Frenchmen, they prefer that than to be called Franco-Americans, a term foreign to them. The Franco-Americans are in Lewiston, Biddeford, Brunswick, Lawrence, Lowell, Fall River, Providence, and in other French-speaking communities in the New England States. These are not Acadians; they are French Canadians from the Province of Quebec.

The people of the Valley Anglicize the pronunciation of their names as much as they can. They are proud to be Americans, and as such they claim no other nationality. They are not French-Americans, they are not French-Canadians, they are Americans.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
	Preface	2
	Introduction	3
CHAPTER I	Madawaska Area Was Early Scene of Indian Martyrdom	8
CHAPTER II	St. John Valley was Travel Artery Over 200 Years Ago	12
CHAPTER III	Madawaskans are Britons and Normans at the Same Time	15
CHAPTER IV	Acadians in 18th Century had Steadfast Principles	18
CHAPTER V	French looked to Upper St. John for Religious Freedom	22
CHAPTER VI	First Madawaska Settlement Became Enduring Community	26
CHAPTER VII	Madawaska Colonists Built First Church at St. Basil	30
CHAPTER VIII	Aunt Blanche was Heroine of Colonist's Black Famine	35
CHAPTER IX	Acadian Settlers in Valley Lost Country and Nationality	41
CHAPTER X	War of 1812 Made Settlers' Fate and Allegiance Uncertain	45
CHAPTER XI	French Names in 1820 Were "Murdered" by Census Takers	49
CHAPTER XII	Forests of St. John Valley One Cause of Aroostook War	54
CHAPTER XIII	Early Attempt to Incorporate Madawaska Led to Arrests	59
CHAPTER XIV	Aroostook's Bloodless War Ended in Boundary Settlement	64
CHAPTER XV	Treaty of 1842 was Turning Point in Madawaska History	68
CHAPTER XVI	Period of Progress  Lawrence A. Violette, Former Superintendent of Schools, Madawaska, Maine	74  78



## CHAPTER I

### MADAWASKA AREA WAS EARLY SCENE OF INDIAN MARTYRDOM

The Republic of Madawaska is bounded by New Brunswick and Maine at an angle where the two meet the Province of Quebec. The St. John River divides the territory into two equal parts, and this territory extends from Grand Falls to Seven Islands, a distance of 150 miles in length and from 40 to 80 miles in breadth, making a total of 9,000 square miles.

Before the treaty of 1842, the portion, allotted by compromise between New Brunswick and Quebec which were claiming the territory and which the United States had not as yet annexed, extended from the Aroostook Valley to Lake Temiscouata, an area of 12,000 square miles.

Although its surface is varied and unequal in height, Madawaska cannot be ranked as a mountainous country. Its so-called mountains, the highest being 1000 feet, are but hills, compared with the mountains of Switzerland. Nevertheless, the varied aspects of its surface with its fairly high peaks, numerous water rapids, abundant vegetation, and picturesque scenery, make this region one of the most attractive in the east. The region has the largest portion of the greatest river basin of the Atlantic Provinces and one of the most beautiful in North America: The St. John River.

The water of the St. John River is so clear and its banks so delightful that the river has been compared with the Rhine and Rhone Rivers in France. It crosses Madawaska in the middle of its course, but at this spot it is magnificent in all its enchanting splendor.

The St. John and its tributaries have falls which furnish light and power to several towns in the Valley. The most important is Grand Falls in Victoria County which after Niagara is one of the most impressive sights that one may encounter in



North America. The Falls, which have a vertical height of , feet and a cascade of 45 feet, are the chief source of hydraulic power in the Maritime Provinces.

The soil in this area is very fertile and its climate is one of the most temperate and healthful of the eastern provinces. The winters are not so long and rugged as they used to be. The summers are hot, and Jack Frost, which in the Spring and Fall was the terror of the pioneers, is not so today.

The vast forests of Madawaska have attracted many explorers from the forests of New England and the Maritimes. The woodland wealth of this region was the cause of many heated debates between Maine and New Brunswick.

For a long time the valley was called the hunter's paradise. Hunting was the principal means of subsistence among the pioneers, although the rivers and lakes abounded with fish.

The St. John Valley is the promised land to which came the Acadian Ancestors after 1755. In this Valley, which was already inhabited by the friendly Malecite Indian Tribe, a permanent settlement was made by the Acadians in 1785.

On a promontory near Edmundston on the highway to St. Basile is the Indian Reservation of Madawaska. The early site of the Indian village was precisely where the City of Edmundston is today and was called Madoueskak. The tribal headquarters were on the present site of the Edmundston Post Office (now Woolworth's). At the time of the Acadian settlement, the village had a population of 300 and was the important seat of the Malecite Tribe. The principal villages of the Malecites on the St. John River were St. John, Springhill, seven miles north of Fredericton, Medoctec, eight miles south of Woodstock, and Madawaska at the mouth of the Madawaska River which flows through the City of Edmundston.

The Malecites were one of the tribes of the Abenakis and the Passamaquods who held settlements in the entire St. John Valley. The Abenakis belonged to the Algonquin Confederation which occupied all the Canadian lands east of the Great Lakes and extended across Acadia and New England. The Micmacs of Nova Scotia and East New Brunswick also belonged to the Algonquin Confederation. The Abenakis dominated the St. John and Kennebec Valleys. The name of Madawaska is of Micmac origin. Madawes means porcupine, and kak means place; hence the land of the porcupine.

The Malecites were nomads given to fishing and hunting and many times they pursued their enemy, the Mohawk. Although in the barbarian stage, the Malecite never attacked or



insulted a woman. His wife was his slave, but strange to say, the women were more cruel than their husbands toward their victims.

The Iroquois, the inveterate enemy of the Malecites, came to the St. John Valley, took a village at the mouth of the Allagash and massacred all the inhabitants. When they arrived in Madawaska, the brave Pemmyhaouet, chief of the Malecites, with a hundred warriors organized to protect the fort. In the ensuing battle, the bold Pemmyhaouet fell and his son was fatally wounded. As the defenders of the fort fell one by one, their wives and young daughters took their place at the post. After several days, they had no more bows and arrows and had to leave the place. It was then that the Mohawks found two women who were desperately hoping to die in order to be delivered from the hands of the Mohawks. They were Necomah, the wife of chief Pemmyhaouet, and Malobiannah, the fiancee of Pemmyhaouet's son.

The Iroquois warriors planned to carry their pillage down the river, but being unfamiliar with the navigation of the St. John, they seized their two captives and forced them to accompany them as their guides. When night had come, the birch canoes were tied to one another and were left to be watched by Malobiannah alone, as Necomah, the wife of the old chief, had already died of grief.

Malobiannah, weeping over the death of her fiance and grieving over the woes inflicted on her race, kept in her heart an Indian revenge, and resolved then and there to avenge those she had loved and at the same time, save her kinsfolk at Springhill and Medoctec by directing the float toward the murderous Falls.

At a short distance from the Falls, some of the warriors were awakened by the roar of the thunderous waters and on being assured by their guide that this was a tributary of the Walloos-took, they went back to sleep. A few hundred feet from the treacherous Falis, they realized but too late the danger of being engulfed in the turbulent cataract. They jumped out of their canoes, but they disappeared in the precipice while cursing the heroic Malobiannah who had sacrificed her life to avenge her race and her fiance.

A map of the St. John Valley dated 1699 shows nine Indian settlements in the Madawaska area. There were three in the Aroostook Valley, four in the St. John, one at Eagle Lake, and one at Squatteck Lake.

During the American Revolutionary War, the Malecites, whose sympathies were with the revolutionists, travelled to Fredericton to meet Colonel John Allan of Machias, Maine, with the purpose in mind of forming an alliance against England. The zeal and respected authority of the missionaries persuaded them



to stay within the law and had them respect the rights of the English Loyalists. Nevertheless, they were constantly on the alert during the War of Independence.

On account of a decline in population, the Madawaska Indians lost the right to a political chief, but they regularly elect a titular chief who is the Lieutenant of the Chief of Tobique. Every year they go to pay homage to their chief at Tobique. The assembly of the tribe usually takes place on Corpus Christi Day at Tobique, the seat of the tribe, a few miles south of Grand Falls. The settlement is in charge of Franciscan Fathers.



## CHAPTER II

### ST. JOHN VALLEY WAS TRAVEL ARTERY OVER 200 YEARS AGO

It is most probable that the Indians were the first to inform the French about Madawaska. Champlain knew something about this region in 1612, since his maps show the location of the Madawaska River and Lake Temiscouata without indicating them by name.

Many Europeans had already travelled in this area. The Recollet missionaries with Jacques de la Foye, Louis Fontiner, and Jacques Cardon had travelled through Madawaska from Port Royal to Quebec while navigating the St. John, St. Francis, and Loup Rivers.

Feudal grants were made as early as 1683 to several French people, Madawaska being one of the land grants conceded to them.

A large number of travellers crossed the Valley during the war between England and France. Both countries fought for the supremacy of Acadia and Canada between the years 1755 and 1760. It is then that Madawaska became the link between Acadia and Canada. In 1756, there were two French post offices in the Madawaska Territory, one at Grand Falls and the other at Lake Temiscouata.

The exodus of the Acadian people which began in 1755 by their expulsion from Grand-Pré ended at Fredericton to begin again in 1759 when many had to flee to the St. John Valley to get away from the English Loyalists who were threatening them. Many had fled to the Province of Quebec, but when they heard that Louisburg in 1758 and Quebec the year after had fallen in the hands of the English, these refugees pledged unconditional allegiance to England and returned to their lands. It is then that many of these repatriated Acadians stopped in St. Basil, but never dreamed for a moment that 26 years later, this land was to be-



come the cradle of a new settlement.

It is the daring messengers who carried the mail from Nova Scotia to Quebec who knew well the St. John Valley which was but a forest inhabited by Indians, woods adventurers, and wild animals. They carried messages under trying circumstances, hardship, and danger, sometimes a distance of 600 miles in canoes during the summer and on snowshoes in the winter. The Acadian messengers made the journey in 15 days at an average of 40 miles a day.

During the War of Independence, two Mohawks, enemies of England, had ambushed in the Madawaska River Valley to get hold of the mail in order to sell war correspondance to American agents. They pursued one of the messengers for many days in vain. The messenger, being tired of this man hunt, found a cabin at the mouth of the St. Francis River. Knowing how superstitious and naive these Indians were, he knew how to fool them and fill them with fright. Having eaten his supper, he began to pack his belongings to be ready to leave early the next day. Pretending to ignore the presence of the two Indians nearby, he took a large stump, the size of a man, placed it on the cot where he used to sleep, and covered it with ordinary blankets without forgetting the traditional nightcap, then went to hide where he could watch the result of his stratagem. In the middle of the night, he saw two shadows going toward the cabin. The Mohawks entered the unlocked cabin and jumped on their supposed victim. With their tomahawks, they struck with such violence that their tomahawks bounced back with a dry and ringing sound. Suspecting witchcraft, they believed that the Great Spirit had metamorphosed their victim, and being seized with fright, they fled to the hills.

Several years after the settlement of the Valley, J. G. Dean of Maine was sent in 1828 to get information concerning the boundaries. Dean tells that in 1782 a boy of 14, Pierre Lizotte, who had been lost in the woods of Kamouraska, crossed to the mouth of the Madawaska River where he saw a few Indian huts. He spent the winter with the Indians and returned home in the Spring. He urged his half-brother, Pierre Duperry, to go back with him to the land he had visited in order to establish trading posts among the Indians. In 1784, we find Lizotte and Duperry at their fur trading post near the Indian village. Duperry and Lizotte did not settle in that village since we find their names in the census of Fredericton taken about that time. However, they came back with Acadian pioneers and settled in the Valley. Lizotte died in St. Basile at the age of 96, and Duperry died in Madawaska at the age of 68.

About the same time two brothers, Anselme and Michel Robichaud, merchants of Kamouraska, established a fur trading post



in Madawaska. An Irishman, by the name of Kelly, came to the Valley for commercial purposes, but these were itinerant merchants who never settled in the Valley until the arrival of the Acadians from Fredericton in 1785.

It was only after the American Revolutionary War, at the time of the coming of the English Loyalists to Fredericton, that the Acadians thought of a settlement in the St. John Valley. Strange to say, the Loyalists, who had been persecuted in the United States for being loyal to England, did not wait long before they began to work hardships on the Acadians who were the first to settle in the region of Fredericton. Threatened once more, the Acadians decided to leave their farms. Some came to Madawaska, others joined their brethren at Memramcook, and still others went to settle on the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.



## CHAPTER III

### MADAWASKANS ARE BRITONS AND NORMANS AT THE SAME TIME

The people of Madawaska are Britons and Normans at the same time. The Acadian families which settled the St. John Valley came from the west of France, some from the Province of Poitou, others from Saintonge, but they came principally from Brittany, whereas the Canadian families came from Normandy, although some came from Picardy, others from the Province of Maine in France, and still others from the Isle of France and other northern provinces.

The Canadian families settled on the Bay of Fundy and on the shores of the St. Lawrence. The two groups, the Acadians and the Canadians, separated by a different political organization and under a different administration, became isolated to such an extent that, although of the same origin, they are two different people. However, in Madawaska, after more than a century, the original difference was less marked on account of intermarriage, interrelationship, and constant contact, and this difference made the real Madawaskan who is Briton and Norman at the same time, stubborn and smart, honest and gay, active and intelligent, generous and full of initiative, hospitable but misunderstood. The long separation of the two groups caused the Acadians and Canadians of the same origin to become indifferent to one another. There has not been to this day any sign of a compromise for a close relationship between the two groups, in spite of intermarriage and same names. The Canadian has always taken the cold attitude of the Acadian as unfriendly, when all he wanted was to live his own life; having been on his own initiative for a long time, he became indifferent to the other group.

Compelled to forget his real nationality, the Madawaskan has ever answered, as did the old farmer of St. Basile to a lovable and polite but too inquisitive Frenchman from France: "I am a



Madawaskan", with the same boast as the old Roman who used to say: "I am a Roman"; or like the gentleman from London who declared: "I am a British subject".

Most of the Acadian families can find the names of their ancestors in the Acadian census taken in 1671 by Hubert de Grandfontaine. These families came to Acadia in 1632 with Commander de Razilly. The families which came later to Acadia from France have also representatives in Madawaska and can find their names in later Acadian census. Several names are Acadian and Canadian such as: Dupuis, Morin, Pélerin, Lajoie, Savoie, and Bertrand. It is difficult to tell whether these families came from Acadia or Quebec. Some Canadian families that had crossed over to Acadia before 1783 were found in the midst of eventful conflicts which took place before the settlement of Madawaska. Such families had the name of Ayotte, Bourgoin, Sanfaçon, Dupperry, Lizotte, Fournier, and Michaud.

Canadian and Acadian histories used in the schools set 1710 as the year during which French rule came to an end in Acadia. But France had never taken a greater interest in Acadia than after the fall of Port Royal. Immediately after the signing of the Utrecht Treaty, France began to strengthen Cape Breton Island where the Louisburg Fort was built at a cost of \$5,000,000. France took an active interest in the colonization of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and half of the State of Maine as far down as the Kennebec Valley. The French called this territory French Acadia as opposed to the English Acadia of Nova Scotia. Nevertheless, the English claimed all this French territory except Prince Edward Island and Port Royal. The Acadians to the north of the Bay of Fundy refused to take the oath of allegiance to the British crown claiming that they were in French territory. The Acadians of Nova Scotia were under English rule and as such took the oath on condition that they would not be compelled to fight against the French and the Indians. This is the same oath that they took under Governor Phillips in 1730 and from that date, they became known as French Neutrals.

As soon as the Treaty of Utrecht had been signed, the Governor of Louisburg and Quebec pleaded with the Acadians under English rule to leave Nova Scotia and come into French territory at Louisburg, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, or in the St. John Valley. They had the right to leave and many heeded the invitation of the French governors, but the English governors did not want a mass emigration as they needed the Acadians to reenforce Port Royal. The fate of the Acadians became more and more uncertain. They were held under suspicion every time the French, the Canadians, or the Indians tried to reconquer their lost colony. However, since 1730, under the wise administration of unbiased governors, peace was assured and the colony prospered.



After the founding of Halifax, hardships began again to afflict the Acadians on the part of Governor Cornwallis who asked the Acadians to take unconditionally the oath of allegiance to His Majesty King George II who had just ascended the throne of England. War between England and France was in the offing. At Halifax, the English were filled with anxiety and were already beginning to entertain the plot of expelling the Acadians which the English governors had planned a long time before. Cornwallis claimed that the oath taken under Governor Phillips was not valid and that a governor could not attempt anyone from bearing arms against the enemies of England. The Acadians maintained that the oath under Phillips was valid and that it would be inhuman to force them to take another which would compel them to fight against their brethren.

Here is the oath they were asked to take: I promise and I swear with Christian Faith that I shall be faithful and shall obey His Majesty George II whom I recognize as Sovereign Lord of Acadia or Nova Scotia. So help me God.

As Governor Cornwallis threatened the Acadians with the confiscation of all their goods if they refused to take the oath, these asked permission to leave the Province. The Governor dissuaded them by saying that if they did leave, he would be obliged to confiscate all their property. The oath was not taken and no change took place.



## CHAPTER IV

### ACADIANS IN 18TH CENTURY HAD STEADFAST PRINCIPLES

In the Spring of 1755, Governor Lawrence, who had just succeeded Cornwallis, asked the Acadians again to take the oath without reservation. The delegates, chosen by their respective towns to carry the message of refusal to take an oath to bear arms against the French, were put into jail. When the delegates offered to take the oath in their name, the Governor refused by saying that it was too late and that an oath taken under such circumstances was null and void.

The refusal to exempt the French from fighting against their own nationality was brutal, being altogether against the principles of civilized nations, and against the decisions taken afterwards by the successors of Governor Lawrence. During the American Revolutionary War, the pioneers from New England, who had come to settle on the farms left vacant by the Acadians, addressed a petition to Governor Wilmot in 1777 to be exempted from bearing arms against their friends and relatives. The petition read as follows:- "For those of us who belong to New England, being invited into the Province by Governor Lawrence's proclamation, it must be the greatest piece of cruelty and imposition to march into different parts in arms against our friends and relations." The petition asked the same privilege for the Acadians in Nova Scotia who had friends and relatives exiled in New England. The petition was granted.

A short time before the debacle of 1755, the missionary, Father Leloutre, asked many of the future founders of the Madawaska Settlement to leave Nova Scotia to settle at Beausejour. Among them, we find Jean Cyr, Jean-Baptiste Cormier, Joseph Daigle, Simon Hébert, Joseph Thériault, Jean-Baptiste Thibodeau, Zacharie Ayotte, Joseph Mauzerolle, and one family by the name of Potier.

Early in the summer of 1755, Colonel Moncton landed on



army of 2,000 men in front of the fort at Beausejour. On account of the cowardice of Vergor, commander of the fort, Moncton took the place without any opposition. In view of this easy success, Lawrence and Shirley (Governor of Boston) decided that the time had come for them to strike a blow. In order to avoid any armed resistance, they had already removed all firearms from the Acadians. Everything was wrought out in secrecy, but the alarm was somewhat general among the Acadians without their knowing any too well the plans of Governor Lawrence.

In the beginning of September, Winslow and Murray arrived in Grand-Pré. They summoned all the inhabitants of the place and surrounding towns to assemble in the church to hear a message from His Majesty.

Not suspecting any treachery, the Acadians came in large number to Grand-Pré. The doors were locked as soon as all had entered the church. Winslow proclaimed to the stupefied Acadians that they were prisoners of the King and that their goods were confiscated to the profit of the Crown, and that they themselves would be deported to foreign lands. He advised them on the manner they should behave in the new country to which they were to be taken. At the point of the bayonet, they were ushered to the boats which were waiting for them, and at "Anchors Aweigh", Winslow and Murray proposed a toast to the Acadians for a happy cruise.

The forewarned inhabitants of Beaubassin escaped. On the Isthmus, the English soldiers met a lively match. At Petitcodiac and Memramcook, many bloody skirmishes took place. At Shepody, many English soldiers were killed near the church. About 8,000 were taken into exile and were scattered along the Atlantic Coast from Boston to the Gulf of Mexico. Some ships went to France and England, others reached the Antilles, Bermuda, and Corsica Island.

The deportation did not end with Grand-Pré. The inhabitants of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island were no less spared. Military expeditions were sent against the settlements of those areas to complete the work of Lawrence and Shirley. The task of the St. John Valley was confided to Colonel Moncton. In this Valley there were several groups of dwellings from St. John to Fredericton, the principal settlements being Grimrose with a population of 350, Villerai, Jemseg, Robichaud, Belle-Isle, Nashwack, and Springhill with a population of 250.

Moncton with his 12,000 Rangers had done his work so well that he left nothing but smoking ruins on his passage. The season was too far advanced for him to reach Fredericton, which he had intended to set on fire. Most of the inhabitants of those devastated



areas had taken flight to the forest or had taken refuge in Fredericton. Moncton, therefore, returned to Halifax with a few captives. Fredericton was to have its turn.

In the winter of 1758, another regiment of Rangers under Moses Hazen was sent to put an end to the settlement of the St. John River. Hazen's soldiers took Fredericton by surprise, set fire to the houses, massacred the inhabitants who refused to help spread the fire from dwelling to dwelling. Two women, Anastasie Bellefontaine, wife of Eustace Pare, and the wife of her brother, Michel Bellefontaine, were massacred with their four children for resisting the English soldiers. The Rangers took 23 prisoners. The fugitives went to Canada or took refuge in the forest.

The Acadians whom the English could not seize were constantly harassed by the soldiers until the end of the war. Even at the end of the war, in the Spring of 1763, Lieutenant Studholme, commander of the 40th Regiment at Fort Howe now at St. John, by the order of the Governor of Nova Scotia, Belcher, ordered all the refugees of Springhill to evacuate the village and get out of the Province. Having learned that a hundred Acadians had settled at a short distance from Springhill, he ordered them out despite their promises to leave the following Spring.

At the end of 1763, the future founders of Madawaska were either political prisoners in New England; such families were: Cyr, Cormier, Saindon, Bourgoin, Thériault, Thibodeau, Mauzerolle; or they were refugees on the shores of the St. Lawrence from Quebec to Cacouna, such were: Cyr, Cormier, Daigle, Hébert, Fournier, and Mercure. The others had found a refuge in the forest.

The Treaty of Paris, 1763, left England mistress of Canada, Acadia, and Newfoundland. Some 60,000 Canadians and the once flourishing colony of the Acadians came under British Rule. The Acadians took the oath of allegiance without reservation. Four years later, they were allowed to return to the land of their fathers. A group of 800 Acadians from Boston undertook the crossing of the forest of Massachusetts and Maine to come back to their native land which they had not seen since 1755. It was a long trek, an unbearable march, so much so that many died on the way. Another nationality had taken possession of their lands where their fathers lie buried. The English Loyalists, who had settled in that area, watched this caravan of Acadians pass by, Acadians who were not begging but were weeping as they had to move forward on to some other place to the end of St. Mary's Bay where they settled and where they are prosperous today.

While the Acadians were marching through the forests of Massachusetts, the refugees of the St. Lawrence were also on



their way to the land of their fathers by way of St. John River. During a sojourn in Kamouraska and vicinity, they met many relatives and friends. They therefore, invited these to go along with them to the fertile lands around Fredericton. In Fredericton, they noticed that another nationality had the farms they had left vacant a long time ago. The Acadians, therefore, settled nearby at Springhill, at French Village, and at Kingsclear, all three villages being eight, twelve, and fifteen miles from Fredericton.

Another group of Acadians settled on the Kennebeccasis at a little distance from St. John, New Brunswick. It was a few years later that the Rev. Father Joseph Mathurin Bourg, the only Catholic missionary allowed in the Maritimes by the Halifax government, came to visit them. He baptized children of six, eight, and ten years of age who had never seen a priest before.



## CHAPTER V

### FRENCH LOOKED TO UPPER ST. JOHN FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

All the settlements on the Lower St. John River were already flourishing at the time of the American Revolutionary War. The thirteen colonies of America, tired of the exigencies of the mother country, revolted and broke the tie with England in a violent war for independence. France, being mindful of her defeat in 1760, threw her lot with the insurgents. The Acadians, having taken the oath of allegiance without reservation, remained loyal and faithful to England despite the incessant demands of Washington and Lafayette. The Acadians of the Lower St. John River in particular were at the service of the English Canadians and were of great help to the governors of Quebec and Halifax by carrying the mail and war correspondence and by protecting all lines of communication between the two capitals.

The Rebels were victorious. The English flag stopped waving over the largest, the wealthiest, and the most populous colony of North America.

The Confederates' victory was the indirect cause of another exodus of the St. John River and the Bay of Fundy. The English Loyalists of the British Empire, being targets for the Confederates, were jailed on the least pretext, were evicted from their property, as if they had been simple Acadians. It became intolerable for them to live any longer in the new Republic. It is then that several Loyalists decided to follow the British flag to Canada. More than 30,000 Loyalists went to New Brunswick, and this immigration was the cause of the erection of a new province detached from Nova Scotia. Parrtown was at first the capital of New Brunswick, but two years later, in 1784, Fredericton became the seat of the government, whereas Parrtown became the historic St. John, a name it has kept until this day.

Strange to say, these newly-arrived English Loyalists, who



had been persecuted in the neighboring republic and who had been expelled, should have been full of sympathy for the Acadians. On the contrary, they became unbearable neighbors by burning the fences of the Acadians, by stealing their cattle, and by opening the doors of basements during the coldest days of winter to let their vegetables freeze. They wanted to get rid of these French Squatters. Governor Thomas Carleton had to intervene more than once to have the English return to the Acadians what they had unjustly taken.

Governor Parr of Nova Scotia became anxious on account of the warlike attitude of his new Anglo-Saxon subjects, but he never dared displease them. He informed Governor Haldimand of Quebec concerning his anxieties, who in turn proposed a workable plan. Haldimand had often thought of a settlement in the Upper St. John Valley where these people could defend and protect the travelers as well as the mail routes in that solitary area.

Governor Haldimand answered the letter of Governor Parr on November 27, 1783 as follows: "Mercure, the Acadian, recently returned from your Province, tells me that several of his people wish to migrate to this Province for love of their religion which they believe they can follow here with greater freedom and less difficulty. My plan is that you give them grants near Grand Falls on the St. John River, settlements which could probably extend as far as the St. Lawrence River and which would greatly help facilitate communication between the two provinces."

On receiving this letter, Parr was jubilantly pleased. He had already confiscated several farms from the Acadians and now all he had to do was to concede the deeds to the Loyalists. This he did a few days before the arrival of the first Governor of New Brunswick, Thomas Carleton. The new Governor showed more justice and more sympathy toward the Acadians, although he often had to bow under the pressure exercised by the pioneers from New England.

In 1782, the farmlands cleared by French pioneers were confiscated and conceded by Parr to Sir Andrew Snape Hammond for his services. Hammond, however, did not harass the tenants, but in 1786 these farms were deeded to the Loyalists who without pity evicted the Acadians. It is encouraging to note that two Loyalists, Edward Winslow and Ward Chapman, showed some interest toward the evicted Acadians and obtained for them land grants from the New Brunswick Government. Dated November 23, 1786, these grants were conceded to 42 citizens, 15 Acadians and 27 Loyalists. As a result of the grants, the French were deeded farmlands in an area where the English had a majority. From the list of grants, we find the following names: Daniel Michaud, Francis Violette, Charles Blanchard, Jean Robichaud, Jacques De-



veau, Benoit Girouard, Olivier Thibodeau, Joseph Martin, Jean-Baptiste Dominique. All these, isolated by a majority of English grantees, sold their lands to come to Madawaska.

In July, 1783, Major Gilfred Studholme, military commander of Fort Howe at St. John, sent a committee to inspect the upper region of the St. John Valley and asked the same committee to report on the possible colonization of that part of the province. In the report, we notice that the little colony of Springhill near Fredericton, founded since 1768, was the most prosperous Acadian settlement. There were 61 families, or a population of 357. The report further states that the heads of the families had helped the government during the War of Independence. Among these we find Jean Martin and his four sons, Simon, Joseph, François, Armand; Louis Mercure, Joseph Daigle, Jean-Baptiste Gaudin, Olivier Cyr and his brothers, Pierre and Jean-Baptiste. These pioneers were highly recommended to the government for services rendered, and yet Governor Carleton confiscated their lands and gave them to the Loyalists. It is thus that 500 faithful and loyal subjects were rewarded for their services. We must be reminded that the Acadians had taken the oath of allegiance without reservation and had to remain faithful to Britain as they had promised. But as ever, the English always came first when the present interest of the fatherland was concerned.

When the new official eviction notice was made known, the Acadians addressed a petition to officials in Quebec and New Brunswick to obtain lands in the Madawaska area. The first petition addressed by Louis Mercure to Major Holland, general surveyor of Quebec, is dated February 24, 1785, and at the bottom of the petition we find 24 names of Acadians and Canadians who asked land grants in Madawaska, a mile and a half south of the Madawaska River Falls.

Acadian petitioners were: Louis Mercure, Jean Martin, Joseph Daigle, Sr., Joseph Daigle, Jr., Daniel Gaudin, Simon Martin, Armand Martin, Paul Cyr, François Cyr, Joseph Cyr, Jr., Pierre Cyr, Jean-Baptiste Cyr, Firmin Cyr, Alexandre Ayotte, and François Martin.

The Canadian petitioners were: Pierre Duperry, Jean Lizotte, Pierre Lizotte, Augustin Dubé, Robert Fournier, and Louis Sansfaçon.

Another petition found in the Canadian Archives was addressed to the Governor General of Canada. This petition was signed by Jean-Baptiste Cyr, his wife, Marguerite Cormier, and his nine sons, Pierre, Olivier, François, Antoine, Paul, Jacques, Joseph, Firmin, and Jean-Baptiste Cyr, Jr. It was also signed by Alexandre Ayotte, Zacharie Ayotte, Joseph Daigle, Sr., Joseph



Daigle, Jr., Olivier Thibodeau, and Louis Sansfaçon.

We know that another petition was signed by Joseph Daigle and 24 other pioneers asking for grants in Madawaska. The deeds were to be given to those who would be granted them and a subsidy of 200 acres in Madawaska would be given to each family.

A few days after receiving this promise, Jean-Baptiste Cyr held a meeting at his residence where it was decided that half of the colony would go to Madawaska, the other half to be equally divided among Memramcook, Miramichi, Tracadie, Caraquet, and Bathurst.



## CHAPTER VI

### FIRST MADAWASKA SETTLEMENT BECAME ENDURING COMMUNITY

In June 1785, a few families left Fredericton and vicinity to go up the St. John River taking with them the bare necessities, very little clothing and food, as they were using canoes.

Those of them who had never gone up the River were under the impression that they were about to touch the end of their pilgrimage. Whenever a river was crossed, or an Indian village was seen, the children would inevitably ask their parents: "Is this Madawaska?"

After ten weary days they heard the thunderous waters of Grand Falls. Having made the one mile long portage of the Falls, they came to a promontory which dominated the valley of the lower St. John River, and from there they could see a broad valley with hills on both sides. They were at the door of the promised land and there they took a very needed rest.

The travelers continued their journey until they set foot on the south bank of the St. John River, two and one-half miles south of the Malecite village on one of the most elevated flats a short distance from the present church of St. David, Madawaska, Maine. As they were making camp, Joseph Daigle erected a cross at that very place in the land of Madawaska.

On the same day, two young men were sent to the Indian village, now Edmundston, N. B., to advise the chief of their arrival and that their fathers would be in to see him the next day.

At first the Indians did not show much enthusiasm when the strangers arrived, but soon afterwards the meeting was one of the most cordial. The hall to which they were admitted was full of tribal warriors. The Chief, while extending to them a welcome, did not hesitate, however, to warn them that the vast territory between Grand Falls and Lake Temiscouata has always been



known as the land of the Malecites. In a few words, he told the visitors that they could have a part of this land and that he would help them protect it from invaders. "As long as your gun will not refuse to shoot the reindeer, or your nets to catch the fish in our rivers, you shall be welcome, and you shall be my friends."

After this meeting with the chief and his warriors, the Frenchmen returned to meet their fellowmen who had already begun the work of building. This diplomatic meeting won the good graces and protection of the Indians. We must not forget that this Indian village, the Malecite capital of the St. John Valley, had 60 families, and that Francis Xavier who had just spoken to them had 200 warriors under his command, and that on the first day that an argument should ensue between the two, the Acadians would be at the mercy of the Indians.

During the first summer, the pioneers selected their lands and began to clear them. Some settled on the south bank of the river near the cross that was erected upon their arrival; others went down a little way to what is known as Beaulieu, Maine; still others settled near Green River on the north side of the St. John. Two families built their houses near the Indian Reservation and two others settled near the Iroquois River. The larger group which can be called the nucleus of the colony settled at a short distance from the present church of St. David, Madawaska, Maine.

The pioneers planted potatoes and a few acres of wheat. In the lowlands along the St. John there was an abundance of wild hay and tall grass which would feed the cattle they had planned to bring from Springhill in the Fall. The first year, they all lived as one family with everything equally divided among the families.

On the south bank of the St. John River, we find the following families: Pierre Duperry, Paul Potier, Joseph Daigle, Baptiste Fournier, Joseph Daigle, Jr., Jacques Cyr, François Cyr, Firmin Cyr, Alexandre Ayotte, Antoine Cyr, Baptiste Thibodeau, Louis Sansfaçon.

On the north bank near the Indian village we find Louis and Michel Mercure.

Near the Iroquois River we find Olivier and Pierre Cyr.

All these pioneers had come to Madawaska at the end of June, 1785. In the summer, others came from Fredericton to join them. By the Fall of 1787, one could see smoke from twenty chimneys which showed that the colonization of the Madawaska area was growing fast.

The dwellings of the pioneers were not the pretentious kind we find nowadays; they were primitive, and as such they did not



have the luxuries and comforts that we find today in the modern camps of the lumberjacks. The pioneers had no tools and no material with which to build. The dwellings were made of logs insulated with moss and covered with birch bark. It is only later that houses were constructed with cut lumber. In a primitive dwelling, there was but one room with one or two windows facing south which were closed during the winter months with pieces of canvas. In the middle of the room was the hearth with chimney made of stones and cemented by means of a mortar which was made with clay found about. The hearths were good to cook the food and give light at night, but they burned more wood and gave very little heat.

Furniture was very simple: a table, a few benches, two or three chairs, a few beds for the aged and the heads of the families. The children slept in cot beds made of wood which could be closed in the daytime. Table utensils, such as spoons, knives, forks, ladles, were generally made of wood.

The pioneers fed themselves with the flesh of wild animals and fish which abounded in the area.

In the Fall of 1786, the crop was good except for the wheat which was sowed late and was pretty well all destroyed by the September frost. Wool was unknown at that time. Trousers, coats, and boots were made with the skins of wild animals. Imported articles cost exorbitant prices. Groceries were transported from the St. Lawrence by means of sleds, boats, or pack sack.

During the first summer, a few pioneers went to Canada by way of Lake Temiscouata. Two portages separated the Madawaska River from the St. Lawrence. One portage was along the Cabano River which connected the latter with the Rivière des Caps, another reached Trois Pistoles by the Ashberish and Trois Pistoles Rivers. This last portage had a greater advantage over the other since in the fall and spring, the journey was practically done by water. It is in the fall and spring that all groceries and bare necessities were brought to the colony.

It is during one of these journeys that representatives of Madawaska asked Father Adrian Leclerc, pastor of Isle-Verte, to accept them as his parishioners. This missionary's mission comprised all of Gaspesie and the Malecites of Madawaska.

The following summer, 1786, Father Leclerc visited his parishioners of the St. John Valley. It was a short visit since his mission covered 200 miles, and in such circumstances he could not, therefore, stay very long in any one place.

In 1787, Father Leclerc had the joy and satisfaction of saying Mass in the little chapel covered with birch bark and erected



by the pioneers, the first church in Madawaska. The site of that primitive chapel is debated; some hold that it was in St. Basile, N. B., others hold that it was at St. David, Maine, a mile or two from the present church of St. David, Madawaska, Maine. Joseph Daigle, the father of the colony, held the post of Marshal until the canonical erection of the parish.

The second year after the settlement was made in this area, immigrants from the St. Lawrence came to Madawaska. Such were: Soucy, Albert, Michaud, Levasseur, Chaurest, and Saucier from Kamouraska; Dubé, Beaulieu, and Gagné from Isle-Verte; Guimond and Ouellet from Rivière Ouelle; Desnoyers from Rivière du Sud. We must not forget that Duperry, Lizotte, Fournier, and Sansfaçon had already preceded them at the time they joined the Acadians in Fredericton.

The Acadians had to wait five years for the deeds of their lands and not three as was promised by officials of New Brunswick. Several left the colony on account of this delay. However, through Governor Carleton, on October 1, 1790, Joseph Mazerolle and 51 other pioneers were given the documents they had been waiting for.

This first grant, known as the Mazerolle grant, comprised all the territory between the Indian Reservation and Green River, 16,000 acres equally divided into 77 lots on both sides of the river with an average of 200 acres per lot. The West of the Madawaska River plan of Surveyor Sproule has the following note written in the margin: "New Brunswick has no jurisdiction here."

Following is a list of grantees, the first tenants of Madawaska:-

North Bank or St. David, Madawaska, Maine: Pierre Duperry, Augustin Dubé, Pierre Lizotte, Simon Hébert, Paul Potier, François Albert, Jean-Baptiste Mazerolle, Joseph Auclair, François Cyr, Joseph Daigle, Sr., Jean-Baptiste Fournier, Joseph Daigle, Jr., Jacques Cyr, Firmin Cyr, Sr., Jean-Baptiste Cyr, Jr., Michel Cyr, Joseph Hébert, Alexandre Ayotte, Antoine Cyr, Jean Martin, Joseph Cyr, Jr., Jean-Marie Saucier, Zacharie Ayotte, Joseph Saucier, Joseph Ayotte, Mathurin Beaulieu, Louis Sansfaçon, Jean-Baptiste Cyr, Sr., Firmin Cyr, Jr., Jean-Baptiste Thibodeau, Sr., Joseph Mazerolle.

In 1794 the following families received their grants:-

Martin, Gauvin, Bellefleur, Mercure, Cyr, Violette, Thibodeau, Gosselin, Vaillancourt, Amireault, Michaud, Racine, Lizotte, Laforest, Smith, and Marquis.



## CHAPTER VII

### **MADAWASKA COLONISTS BUILT FIRST CHURCH AT ST. BASILE**

The conditions imposed on the pioneers for the titles to the granted farmlands carried with them the obligation of paying annually to the provincial treasury two shillings per 100 subsidized acres on St. Michael's Day (Sept. 29). In addition, 3 acres of farmland had to be cleared within three years on fifty acres granted and a dwelling 15 by 20 feet had to be constructed. All the swamplands had to be drained on the same conditions.

Olivier Thibodeau, Sr., Joseph Thériault, Francis Violette, and others from Kennebeccassis asked for farmlands in Madawaska, and as a consequence another grant was made to Germain Saucier and 23 other pioneers in 1794. This grant extended from Green River to Grand River in Van Buren on both banks of the St. John River. The grantees were the following:-

Green River, north bank: Louis Ouellet, Olivier Thibodeau, Joseph Thériault, Sr., Joseph Thériault, Jr., Jean Thibodeau, Olivier Thibodeau, Sr., and Firmin Thibodeau.

Green River, south bank: Joseph Michaud, Jean-Baptiste Chaurest, Germain Soucy.

Grand Isle, south bank: François Cormier, Alexis Cormier, Pierre Cormier, Louis Leblanc, Grégoire Thibodeau.

Grand River (Van Buren), south bank: Augustin Violette, Francis Violette, Joseph Cyr, Jr.

Grand River (St. Leonards, N. B.), north bank: Hilarion Cyr, Joseph Soucy.

The first settlement at Grand River was on the south bank of the St. John River about two miles north of the present town of Van Buren where the first St. Bruno's Church was built. A



cross was erected by our contemporaries on the highway between Van Buren and Keegan as a reminder of the place where St. Bruno's old church and cemetery were at the Grand River settlement.

From these statistics and on the testimony of Governor Carleton himself, the colony was making rapid progress. The clearing of the lands was way ahead and the crops were abounding good. But soon the inhabitants had to leave the bank of the St. John River where they had constructed their dwellings to move farther and higher to avoid the floods which in the fall and spring threatened to submerge the houses and barns.

As people from the lowlands of Fredericton and those from the St. Lawrence area came in large number to the Madawaska Territory, the population of the region increased to such an extent that it became necessary to have a civil organization to have control over the population. The colony had but two officers in 1790: Marshal Joseph Simon Daigle, and Agent for colonization Louis Mercure. A civil and military administration was to come into its own in the area for no other reason than that in a well-organized society, representatives of civil, military, and religious bodies had become necessary for administrative purposes. On this matter, Lord Dorchester, (Sir Guy Carleton) Governor of Canada, wrote to his brother, Thomas Carleton, Governor of New Brunswick, that he had appointed two military officers for the Madawaska District. They were Captain Francis Cyr and his brother, Lieutenant Jacques Cyr. These officers depended on the Kamouraska army commanded by Colonel François Dambourge who had stopped the attack of Montgomery against Quebec in 1776. As no one knew on whose jurisdiction Madawaska depended, Canada or New Brunswick, Lord Dorchester asked the Governor of New Brunswick to confirm the appointments. The latter acceded to his brother's request and advised him at the same time that he wished to appoint two magistrates for the territory if Lord Dorchester agreed. His candidates were Pierre Duperry and Louis Mercure. But he added at once that he feared that the two appointed citizens would not accept the duties of office on account of the Oath of Office required by law.

The Oath of Office, introduced in England during the reign of Elizabeth and erased from the Statutes of Canada by the Quebec Act of 1774, was still in force in the Maritime Provinces and was taken out of this legislation at the coming of Queen Victoria in 1837. Under this law no one could fill the office of justice of the peace without taking the oath to abjure the Catholic Faith and declare idolatrous Catholic dogmas and creed.

The Governor of Quebec approved the appointments, but



Duperry and Mercure refused to take the Big Oath. Both governors had recourse to a compromise. Among the pioneers, there was a man by the name of Thomas Costin, Scotch and Protestant, who, having studied with the Jesuits of Quebec, knew French, and who, on account of his knowledge and honesty, had a very good reputation among the inhabitants of the area. He had been married to Marie Chenard at Quebec and had been living in Madawaska as a teacher. They appointed Sir Costin as magistrate, and since he was Protestant he could take the oath required by law. Sir Costin became a convert to the Catholic Faith in 1825 and died at a ripe old age at Rivière-du-Loup.

When Father Leclerc died, the mission of Madawaska was confided to the care of Father J. A. Truteaut, pastor of Kamouraska. A short time after, Father Bernard Panet, pastor of River Ouelle, and future Bishop of Quebec, authorized Father Paquet, the new pastor of Isle Verte, to visit the mission of Madawaska.

Father Paquet reached his mission in June, 1791. He advised his new parishioners to build a new church. Joseph Daigle was re-elected marshal for the second time with Jacques Cyr and Alexandre Ayotte as his assistants. Work on the new church was begun at once.

The following spring when the inhabitants of Madawaska heard that Father Paquet was unable to come to Madawaska at Easter time, all the faithful gathered at the residence of the oldest citizen in the colony and voted that all those who could make the trip to Isle Verte (100 miles away) would get there to perform their Easter duties. Two days after, they were rapping on the door of the pastor of Isle Verte. The latter, greatly surprised, received them in the rectory with all the affection of a father. The next day at Mass where all received Holy Communion, the pastor publicly expressed his joy at seeing the faithful of his far away mission and the admiration he felt for their spirit of faith. Then addressing the faithful of the parish, he added: "Such sentiments are worthy of the first Christians, worthy of their fathers who were always noted for their piety, their sacrifices for their faith, and their devotedness toward the church and its ministers."

Before leaving, the faithful of Madawaska spoke about the construction work already done on the new church building which they hoped would be finished by the time of Father Paquet's next visit in June. The pastor replied: "I must go before then, even if I should have to walk night and day to get there". Fifteen days after this interview, Father Paquet was among his faithful of Madawaska. He read to them a letter received from Bishop Hubert of Quebec telling him to inform the inhabitants of Madawaska that they must not construct a church without first getting permission of the bishop of the diocese who has the right to designate



the place and dimensions of the new church building.

The inhabitants were summoned to a meeting and a request was addressed to the Bishop on July 23, 1792. Twenty-four signed this letter; seven others were absent at the time of the meeting, but had manifested a desire to approve whatever could be decided upon.

Bishop Hubert answered the letter on November 12, 1792 granting them permission to build a wooden church the dimensions and site to be determined by Father Paquet whom he authorized to act in his name, and since the mission takes place in June, the Bishop gave as patron of the new church, St. Basile the Great, Bishop of Caesarea and Doctor of the Church whose feast day is celebrated on June 14.

Madawaska had thus been canonically erected as a parish under the patronage of St. Basile the Great on November 12, 1792. St. Basile of Madawaska is one of the oldest parishes erected in the Maritimes since the expulsion of the Acadians. Two older ones in New Brunswick preceded St. Basile: Memramcook in 1781, and Caraquet in 1784. The oldest parishes in Nova Scotia are Halifax erected in 1784, Arichat in 1787, and St. Mary's Bay in 1792.

In the Spring of 1793, Father Paquet visited his new parish in the St. John Valley. He found his parishioners engaged in various activities, such as sowing grain and building new houses. Already a flock of sheep was grazing on the hillsides, oxen were pulling the wooden plow through the new farmlands. From the bank of the River at the foot of a hill could be seen a new edifice in the making, the new church with dimensions of 55 by 35 feet. Instead of the belfry, one could see a big cross on top of the church.

The new church was blessed during a special ceremony and solemn High Mass. The hymns that were sung brought tears to mothers who had heard them in Grand-Pré and Fredericton a long time ago.

After Mass, a meeting was held at which time Joseph Daigle resigned as marshal, and the citizens elected Alexander Ayotte to replace him. Francis Cyr was elected his assistant.

At the request of the pioneers, the New Brunswick government had granted lot 24 of the Mazerolle settlement for public buildings. On that very lot the new church was built. The citizens on the north bank had signed this petition because it was to their advantage to have the church on their side of the River which was at St. Basile, N. B. The other group on the Madawaska side of the St. John, had wanted the church on the south bank, but it was



decided that the building would be on the north bank. A rivalry developed between the people of both banks of the River, and as time went on, this wide divergence became more pronounced. However, this did not affect the prosperity of the colony, nor did it disturb the peace.

At this time roads were opened between the more densely populated settlements, and old roads were ameliorated. In 1792, the government appointed road commissioners, constables, and foresters. Relay stations were established between Grand Falls and Madawaska for mail carriers and travelers.

The colony had just been organized as a religious, military and civil body; its survival was assured.



## CHAPTER VIII

### AUNT BLANCHE WAS HEROINE OF COLONISTS' BLACK FAMINE

The double jurisdiction, which had presided at the foundation of the Madawaska settlement, did not delay to become a source of conflicts between the Provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick. The Province of Quebec had been the first to exercise its authority in this territory by granting the Lordship of Madouesca at the foot of Lake Temiscouata and by establishing relay stations for the protection of travelers. Moreover, the nationality of the inhabitants gave Quebec a right to protect this territory. But against these pretensions, Quebec had written treaties and interprovincial agreements which were fixing the boundaries of the Provinces.

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Since the settlement of the colony, the government of New Brunswick had exercised a continued and uncontested authority. New Brunswick did not delay to rise against the encroachments of Canada in this territory. The government of Fredericton sent its general surveyor, George Sproule, to meet the surveyor of Canada, Samuel Holland, with word to come to a definite understanding regarding the boundaries of the two Provinces.

The pretensions of the two representatives were such that it was impossible to come to an understanding on any point. No agreement was reached. Sproule wanted the boundary between Lake Temiscouata and the St. Lawrence River, whereas Holland wanted to include Madawaska in Quebec with the demarcation line at Grand Falls and from there to the Restigouche River.

In discussing this business, Lord Dorchester became more anxious for the general interest of Canada than his brother, Thomas Carleton of New Brunswick. In a letter addressed to him shortly after Holland's return to Quebec, he said: "As for the boundaries between the two Provinces of His Majesty, it matters little that the contested area belongs to one or the other Province;



but if we consider the possibility that the United States will naturally look upon these boundaries as the beginning of its own frontier, then the matter becomes important."

However, the pioneers, having learned that Quebec wanted to include Madawaska within its boundaries, addressed a petition to Governor Carleton in which they made known that they desired to stay with their Acadian brethren under the laws of New Brunswick, adding that communications by the St. John River were easier for the transportation of their products, although importation was from Canada by way of Lake Temiscouata. The petition was signed by 60 heads of families, that is, by two-thirds of the population. This initiative on the part of the inhabitants seems to have changed the attitude of Canada which, for a time at least, became disinterested in the settlement of the boundaries. But the United States was about to enter on the scene and unite the two rival Provinces for its common protection.

The Treaty of Versailles had designated the St. Croix River as the boundary line between New Brunswick and Maine. The name of St. Croix did not exist any more. The United States took the Magaguadavic for the old St. Croix, whereas New Brunswick maintained that the Schoudic River was the St. Croix. In 1794, a commission was appointed by Great Britain and the United States to study the contested boundary, having discovered on the Schoudic River the ruins of the De Monts settlement which identified the St. Croix and at the same time, the boundaries given by the Versailles Treaty. The St. Croix became the uncontested boundary and assumed its historical name. The commission did not go any further. The remaining boundaries became an open field for the ambition of the two unfriendly countries.

Despite disagreements between the governors themselves or with the United States which sometimes troubled the peace of the colony, life in Madawaska was peaceful and went on without any notable events. Canadians and Acadians rubbed elbows in a friendly way. As in the beginning, the men outnumbered the women, so young men of Madawaska went to get a wife in Kamouraska. The distinct characteristics between Acadian and Canadian were at that time more pronounced than at a later date when the fusion of the two was more complete.

The Acadian was more reticent, less understood, and less satisfied than his relation from the St. Lawrence who would reveal his projects to any stranger within an hour's conversation. The Acadian was more diffident, more cold, and waited until someone came to him. He was more pessimistic than his jovial neighbor and always represented things unfavorably. But when he had given his word, that word was as binding as any written law or contract.



The Canadian who was as frank was less apt to keep his word once given. However, he had more knowledge and more initiative.

The Acadian was equally active but was more attached to old methods and customs. Being suspicious, he took offense at the Canadian custom of locking doors when he did not know padlocks or any other locks.

The Canadian cousin had more order in the administration of his business as he had in his work. He was more strict in his relations with his neighbor. The Acadian was more negligent in his business which he passed on to others; he was less thrifty, as he relied more on Divine Providence. Gabriel was more skilled in construction work than Jean-Baptiste of Canada who surpassed him in the art of agriculture. Because of these differences, it often happened that Baptiste of Kamouraska would plow the fields of his brother-in-law of Beaubassin, singing or spurring his oxen, while his Acadian relative would construct a barn for Baptiste or level a log in a melancholic and dreamy silence.

At this time of isolation all contracts were made orally, so that an oral contract had the force of law. He who broke his contract lost his word. The court was composed of the pastor and two assessors chosen by the pleaders. Once the sentence was pronounced, it took effect immediately. All settlements were made at the church door through the mediation of a common friend.

Peter Fisher wrote in 1825: "The missionary of Madawaska with the assistance of one or two notables of the district keeps the discipline of the place while settling dissensions, and keeping the peace. He succeeds so well that there are no lawyers, no magistrates, no court."

Besides agriculture, the industries at that time were maple sugar, fur trade, and exportation of lumber by water for the English Marine. Summers were entirely devoted to plowing the fields and clearing acres of woodland for cultivation; in winter the men spent their time in lumber camps preparing lumber for the spring drive.

The colony exported grain which they harvested beyond what was needed. The surplus was sold to the colonists and the rest was shipped to Fredericton where the grain market was always good.

Trials which are the lot of beginning colonies brought famine to these brave colonists. For two consecutive years, floods and September frost destroyed the entire crop.

The year 1797 is known in the Annals of Madawaska as the

and I am still learning how much I have left to learn about  
the world around me. But I am also learning how to live  
and how to love.

I am learning how to live in the moment. How to let go of the past and the future. How to be present in the now.

I am learning how to let go of my ego. How to let go of my need for control. How to let go of my need for validation.

I am learning how to let go of my fears. How to let go of my doubts. How to let go of my insecurities.

I am learning how to let go of my pride. How to let go of my need for admiration. How to let go of my need for respect.

I am learning how to let go of my anger. How to let go of my frustration. How to let go of my irritation.

I am learning how to let go of my sadness. How to let go of my grief. How to let go of my heartbreak.

I am learning how to let go of my happiness. How to let go of my joy. How to let go of my excitement.

I am learning how to let go of my love. How to let go of my passion. How to let go of my desire.

I am learning how to let go of my life. How to let go of my existence. How to let go of my being.

I am learning how to let go of my death. How to let go of my non-existence. How to let go of my nothingness.

I am learning how to let go of my soul. How to let go of my spirit. How to let go of my essence.

I am learning how to let go of my body. How to let go of my flesh. How to let go of my bones.

I am learning how to let go of my mind. How to let go of my thoughts. How to let go of my memories.

year of Black Famine. After the last frost in the fall of 1796, the remaining crop was covered by an early snow which brought one of the coldest winters. Many colonists went to the St. Lawrence or to Fredericton to spend the winter. Those who stayed in the colony lived on game and herbs.

After a long period of waiting and anxiety, when the men had gone hunting and snow had been falling for eight days, the food supply was exhausted. The last portion of boiled barley had been eaten, the last cow had been killed, and the hunters had not returned.

It is during these long days of hunger and anxiety that Marguerite Blanche Thibodeau, wife of Joseph Cyr, wrought wonders of heroism and charity. Endowed with herculean strength and a charity as strong, she became the protecting angel of the weak, the invalid, and the hungry people of the colony. On snowshoes, lugging a heavy load of clothes and food, she went from the door of the wealthiest to the door of the poor to bring food and a ray of hope and life. While she buried the dead and snatched from death all those who had lost all hope of help, she gave her care to everyone and built up the morale of those who were letting themselves overcome by poverty and hunger.

At last, one evening the men came back with a companion who had died of cold and hunger and another who was dying, but they also brought food: the colony was saved.

As soon as her works of mercy became known, Aunt Blanche was venerated with great respect and devotion by all the colonists. She cured the sick, found lost articles, reconciled enemies. Her reprimands to delinquents and drunkards were more feared than those of a bishop.

Mrs. Cyr was truly the aunt of a great number of young families in Madawaska. Her mother's name was Leblanc and was the daughter of René Leblanc, Notary Public of Grand-Pré immortalized by Longfellow. She died in 1810 and on account of her great devotedness during the famine, she was buried in the church of St. Basile, a privilege without precedent and accorded to only a few later on. They called her Aunt Blanche and she became the Aunt of Madawaska.

In the spring of 1797, the government came to the help of the poor colonists.

In July, 1794, Madawaska had its first resident pastor, Father François Ciquart, a Sulpician.

Father Ciquart came to Canada under the regime of Governors Craig and Haldimand at a time when French priests were forbidden to enter the country. Haldimand found him and had



him deported to England from where he passed over to France. He was director of the works of the Sulpicians at Bourges when the French Revolution broke out and was sent out of that country in 1792. He came back to America where Bishop Carroll of Baltimore confided to him the Abenaki missions of the Penobscot River. It is from there that he came to the St. John Valley.

Since Father Ciquart knew the language of the Abenakis, Governor Carleton invited him to minister to the Indians of the St. John Valley. He accepted the invitation and protection of the Governor, after which he went to Quebec to be approved by the Bishop.

Bishop Hubert accepted him in his diocese and gave him the parish of St. Basile of Madawaska. The colonists were overjoyed to get a resident pastor. In no time, they built a humble rectory near the church to house their pastor.

Father Ciquart was the father, teacher, doctor, lawyer, and judge of the colony. The Malecites were very pleased to have a missionary who could speak their language. Warriors from Medotec, Springhill, and Tobique came often to St. Basile to hear Father Ciquart preach.

In 1798, Father Ciquart left Madawaska to tend to the Penobscot missions which were more numerous. He came back to Fredericton and later went to Memramcook where he stayed till 1812. He passed by Madawaska on his way to Quebec from where his Bishop sent him to the Indian missions of St. François du Lac. He died in Montreal among his confrères of St. Sulpice in 1824 at the age of 70.

After Father Ciquart's departure, St. Basile became a mission ministered by the pastor of St. André of Kamouraska. But the inhabitants of Madawaska wanted a resident pastor. Since French missionaries were forbidden to enter Canada by the veto of the sectarian governments of Lower Canada and the Maritime Provinces, the Bishop of Quebec did not have enough priests for a country larger than Europe and in a state of rapid development.

Fathers Amyot, Vézina, and Dorval visited St. Basile between 1799 and 1804.

When the inhabitants of Madawaska asked Bishop Denaut for a resident pastor, he ordered them to finish the church and rectory and provide the necessary dispensaries. The following year, he sent Father Charles Hott, assistant at River Ouelle, as pastor of St. Basile. He found the parish in a very neglected condition, but with the help of his parishioners he set everything right.

and the other found soft cores, which would be best suited  
for the kind of soil and the nature of the crop to be grown.  
The results of the experiments were as follows: the first  
series of trials showed a marked increase of yield over the  
control, and the second series showed a marked increase  
over the first, and another third series, and so on.

After the first series of trials had been made, it was  
decided to continue the work, and follow up the results  
of the first series, and to do so, the second series of trials  
was conducted, and the results were as follows:

The results of the second series of trials were as follows:  
The first series of trials showed a marked increase of  
yield over the control, and the second series showed a  
marked increase over the first, and the third series  
showed a marked increase over the second, and so on.  
The results of the third series of trials were as follows:

The results of the third series of trials were as follows:  
The first series of trials showed a marked increase of  
yield over the control, and the second series showed a  
marked increase over the first, and the third series  
showed a marked increase over the second, and so on.

The results of the fourth series of trials were as follows:

The results of the fourth series of trials were as follows:  
The first series of trials showed a marked increase of  
yield over the control, and the second series showed a  
marked increase over the first, and the third series  
showed a marked increase over the second, and so on.

The results of the fifth series of trials were as follows:  
The first series of trials showed a marked increase of  
yield over the control, and the second series showed a  
marked increase over the first, and the third series  
showed a marked increase over the second, and so on.

The results of the sixth series of trials were as follows:  
The first series of trials showed a marked increase of  
yield over the control, and the second series showed a  
marked increase over the first, and the third series  
showed a marked increase over the second, and so on.

The results of the seventh series of trials were as follows:  
The first series of trials showed a marked increase of  
yield over the control, and the second series showed a  
marked increase over the first, and the third series  
showed a marked increase over the second, and so on.

Despite famine and delays caused by the emigration of a few colonists, the colony had increased in population. The settlement at Grand River was encouragingly increasing. The present parish of St. Anne of Madawaska, where the Martin, Cyr, Thériault, Bourgoin, Beaulieu, and Sirois families had settled, was rapidly growing.

The year 1804 witnessed the arrival of the first pioneers of Chautauqua.



## CHAPTER IX

### ACADIAN SETTLERS IN VALLEY LOST COUNTRY AND NATIONALITY

It would be somewhat difficult to have an exact idea of the condition of the Acadians in the Maritime Provinces at the beginning of the 19th century and the state of complete destitution of the population scattered along the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or hidden in the recesses of bays and forests, or as was the case of Madawaska pushed farther up the rivers.

While the English colonies were helped and encouraged by the provincial governments, the Acadians were not even ahead of their fathers of three-fourths of a century before. As for education, very few colonists knew how to read and write.

Compelled to live by hunting and fishing for half a century, they had lost the taste and even the art of agriculture. They had lost their country and their nationality. All that was left were their religion and French ancestry.

Although Madawaska had a soil far more fertile than any other colony in the Maritimes, it had the disadvantage of being situated in the interior, isolated from the other settlements without ways of communication.

Hunting, which had furnished food to the colonists, was decreasing; frost destroyed the crops; many colonists went back to Canada; others went to join the colonists on the Gulf of St. Lawrence which on account of its proximity to the sea had a more favorable climate where fishing was very good in case the crops did not turn well. Madawaska at this time was stationary and in most instances was going backwards.

It was during this general depression and at the time when the question of the boundaries made the fate of the inhabitants rather uncertain at the beginning of the War of 1812 that Bishop



## Plessis visited Madawaska

The missionaries of Bishop Plessis travelled all over Acadia visiting missions from Cape Breton Island to the Upper St. John Valley. Their principal stations were St. Joseph of Carleton, Restigouche, Bonaventure, Bathurst and Caraquet on Chaleur Bay; Tracadie, Miramichi, Richibouctou, Gedaique on the Gulf of St. Mary's Bay; Halifax, Pictou, and Arichat in Nova Scotia; Memramcook on the river of the same name; St. Anne and St. Basile on the St. John River. In the Maritime Provinces, there were about fifteen missionaries.

Grouped around their modest churches, these Acadians, disseminated by exile, wanted to live their own life, resist assimilation, and conquer a new place under the sun.

After the departure of Father Charles Hott, who had been the resident pastor of St. Basil between 1804 and 1806, Madawaska became a mission of St. André of Kamouraska with the ministration of Father Michel Auguste Amyot. Father Amyot had two missions a year, one in winter and the other in June as was the custom with his predecessors. He had deep piety and great devotedness, but he lacked administrative ability so necessary in a new parish. His long hikes on snowshoes during the winters of 1807 and 1808 highly prove his zeal as a missionary. However, the rare visitation of the missionary could not satisfy the needs of the colony which demanded a resident pastor. In October, 1808, Father Jean Baptiste Kelly took the ministration of the St. John Valley with his residence at St. Basile.

Father Kelly was Irish, as his name indicates, but his mother was French Canadian. Brought up in Lower Canada, he knew the two languages of the country. Besides Madawaska, he had the missions of St. Joseph of Carleton, Passamoquoddy, Houlton and Old Town, Maine, with Tobique, Medoctec, St. Anne and St. John, N. B. St. Basile already had the missions of Grand River and Chautauqua. The New Brunswick government continued to protect the missionaries who ministered to the Indians of the St. John Valley. Therefore, Bishop Plessis advised them to stay on good terms with the civil authorities of the Province. On account of poor health, (his chief ailment being rheumatism) Father Kelly could not perform all the parish duties and tend to his numerous missions. The Bishop released him in October, 1810.

His successor at St. Basile was Father Louis Raby, former assistant at St. Laurent near Montreal. The new pastor was young (23 years old) but was endowed with great talent. Being timid by nature, he mixed very little with the people whom he knew too little. He gave the major part of his day to the study of the classics. The more learned of the group of parishioners



said that it would have been preferable to have a pastor who had already completed his Latin classes. Nevertheless, his deep sense of justice, his great devotedness, and his personal merits brought to the studious pastor all the sympathies of the people; and when he left three years after, he was sincerely missed by all the people of Madawaska.

It was during the administration of Father Raby that a notable event became memorable in the ecclesiastical annals of the Maritime Provinces, the pastoral visitation of the illustrious bishop of Quebec, Bishop Joseph Octave Plessis. It was the second time that a bishop of Quebec visited this part of his diocese which extended through the length and breadth of Canada.

Bishop Plessis started from Quebec at the beginning of June, 1812, navigating the St. Lawrence River, cruising along the coast of New Brunswick while visiting all the parishes and missions of Gaspecie, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and Nova Scotia. From Nova Scotia, he crossed over to Prince Edward Island and from there to Cape Breton Island and the Magdalen Islands. Then he went to Memramcook, came back to Cédrique to cruise the Gulf into Chaleur Bay.

His Excellency decided to come to Madawaska by the Restigouche and Grand Rivers. Soon after his arrival at St. Joseph of Carleton on Chaleur Bay, he, with Father Charles François Painchaud, the local pastor and founder of the College of St. Anne de la Pocatière in 1827, Father Côté, his chaplain, and Louis Lemieux, his servant, left for the missions of Restigouche where the natives promised to lead the bishop and his crew to the Grand River settlement at Van Buren where the colonists of Madawaska were supposed to join them.

It is during this apostolic visitation that war between England and the United States was declared on June 18, 1812.

While crossing Northumberland Strait to go to Cape Breton Island, the bishop was attacked by fishermen of Nova Scotia who took him for an American pirate who had dared to venture in British waters. All were stupefied when they recognized their bishop who was on his way to administer the sacrament of confirmation to their children. Awkwardly, they made all sorts of excuses which delighted the bishop.

The Madawaska settlement which the bishop intended to visit was at that time a country contested by the two governments of England and America. He did not dare to go there without first sending ahead one who knew the St. John River and who could warn the bishop in case of any danger to be encountered in the enemy country so that the bishop could retrace his step in time



to avoid any mishap. Father Painchaud and two Indians were chosen to precede the bishop and his crew. After many days of painful privations and delays, the bishop reached Madawaska. When his business was completed in Madawaska, he visited all the missions on the Madawaska River and Lake Temiscouata on his way to Quebec which he reached on September 12 the same year.

According to his diary in which he kept all the details of his apostolic travels, the Bishop of Quebec was not very much impressed by the Acadians of the Madawaska settlement. He meant well, but we must remember that the bishop had a very unpleasant journey and encountered many hardships. His appreciation of the population would have been more complete if he had mentioned the heroic virtues of the colonists after enumerating their faults. It was mostly on the administrative point of view that he judged the colonists of Madawaska who, although wishing to be respectful, were sometimes too persistent in urging the bishop to give them a resident pastor.

The other notable visitors who came to Madawaska at about the same time wrote praiseworthy appreciations on the character of the people and the honesty of their lives. Among them was Joseph Bouchette, general surveyor of Lower Canada and well-known historian and geographer. Peter Fisher, one of the first historians of New Brunswick who was well-acquainted with the people of Madawaska, passes judgment on the population by saying: "They have a settlement separate from that of the English. They have been since peaceful pioneers and well-disposed toward the government. They are today a gay, honest, peace-loving, and hospitable people." Jackson, an American, in his geological report of 1836, gives a pleasant description of Madawaska. We could mention several other witnesses such as Rameau de Saint-Père, Sir John Harvey, Canon Mercier, Sir Arthur Gordon, Davies, Deane and Kavanagh of Maine who all highly praise the people of Madawaska.

Bishop Plessis did not forget the colonists of Madawaska upon his arrival in Quebec. He sent them Father Marcoux whose administrative talent was widely known. In 1814, he began the construction of a new church which was completed by 1817. This was the third church in St. Basile.

Father Marcoux was a priest of action who knew no obstacle. His study and mastery of the Abenaki language pleased the Malecite Indians who praised the sagacity of the priest who could speak the Indian language.



## CHAPTER X

### WAR OF 1812 MADE SETTLERS' FATE AND ALLEGIANCE UNCERTAIN

The War of 1812 had left the boundaries of Maine and New Brunswick in a worse state than before. The people of Madawaska were in a continual state of anxiety during the war, as the fate and allegiance of the people depended on the settlement of the boundaries. Officially, they kept the strictest neutrality. They even thought of declaring the contested area an independent country.

As long as the war lasted, American spies kept a constant vigil on the frontiers. Several Canadian mail carriers were arrested near Grand Falls and Presque Isle. Robbers, highjackers, and sharpshooters infested the forests of Lake Temiscouata, so much so that the Canadian postal service was as dangerous as costly, and no mail carrier dared to pass there without an escort of soldiers.

At this time, another event worth mentioning is the marching of the 104th Infantry Regiment of New Brunswick through the area in 1813 on its way to the threatened boundaries of Lower Canada. The Regiment left St. John, N. B. on February 11 and reached Quebec the 27th of the same month without losing one man. The Regiment was composed of Loyalists, and false rumors were spread all over the area that these Loyalists were coming to evict the colonists from their lands as had been done in Nova Scotia because they refused to bear arms against the Americans. Their worry had no bounds. Already some were preparing to resist them with the help of Americans, others wanted to flee to the hills when the Regiment passed by without any sign of hostility. This time the Loyalists were on their way to fight soldiers and not unarmed colonists.

The War of 1812 proved to the authorities of New Brunswick and Lower Canada the lack of protection on the frontiers



and on the military and postal routes in the east of Canada. Lower Canada took the initiative by establishing between the St. Lawrence and St. John Rivers ten stations under the protection of the Royal Veterans who stayed until the peace of Gand in 1814. Most of these veterans settled on farms in the Valley of Lake Temiscouata and became the pioneers of that valley. Such were Smith, Simpson, Jones, Slight, McDonald, Stripman, Bannon, Ruff, Clifford, Gardner, Doll, Henry, Gillaway, Peters, Hogg, Payne, McLeod, Wandiskin, and Anderson.

New Brunswick on one hand began to think of colonizing the present county of Victoria. The Province had always maintained stations at Grand Falls and Woodstock, but places in between were without protection. Its first colony was that of Salmon River where farmlands were conceded to soldiers who had taken part in the War of 1812. The Rangers of New Brunswick settled Victoria County in large numbers.

The State of Maine on the other hand encouraged the colonization of the contested area and took possession of the Upper Aroostook Valley. A few colonists crossed the St. John River to settle at Baker Brook.

Chautauqua (Frenchville) and Grand Platin (Big Flat, just above Frenchville) were settled by several pioneers among whom we find the following: Germain Saucier, Jean Baptiste Daigle, Dominic Daigle, Michel Morin, José Michaud, Emmanuel Michaud, Raphael Michaud, Sigefroi Nadeau, Béline Ouellet, and Hubert Caron.

St. Hilaire was settled a few years after Chautauqua by Hilaire Cyr, Hilarion Daigle, Louis Albert, Paul Marquis, Théotime Chassé, and Olivier Chassé.

Fort Kent was settled in 1812 by José and Sigefroi Nadeau, Baptiste Daigle, François Thibodeau, and Basile Albert.

Clair, N. B. was settled at the same time as Fort Kent by the families of Cyr, Albert, Levasseur, Landry, and Long.

Minain Cyr and his three sons Théodule, Didyme, and Zéphirin settled at St. Francis Ledges, N. B. on Crock River in 1816. The Albert and Thibodeau families joined them shortly after.

The first colonist of St. Francis, Maine was Louis Albert who was followed by a Thibodeau family.

The first American families to settle in Madawaska on Baker Brook were Nathan and John Baker, and John Harford.

St. Leonard, N. B., settled by the Violette and Cyr families, was soon settled by other families among whom we find the families of Cormier, Gauvin, Ouellet, Coombs, Parent, Nadeau,



McRay, and Powers. The last three settled near Grand Falls.

Grand Falls had one family, Isaac Michaud, besides the soldiers stationed at the fort.

St. Jacques, in 1820, had Francis McDonald and Lewis Strou-piana, said Stripman, a Spanish soldier in England's service during the War of 1812. Among the first pioneers of St. Jacques we find Firmin Michaud, Saint-Onge, Robinson, and Hughes.

Edmundston was settled by Simonnet Hébert whose dwelling served as hotel to travelers.

Despite progress made since the settlement of the colony, agriculture was still in the primitive stage. Implements were still made of wood, only they were better made.

At this time, three great innovations transformed the interior of houses and the material side of life. These were stoves, grist mills, and hydraulic saw mills.

The first stoves were imported from Canada by way of the St. John River.

The first grist mills were constructed in 1800. They were installed on brooks and were made according to models used in Nova Scotia and Bay of Fundy.

The first mill was constructed at St. Basil by Paul Potier. Another one was at St. David the property of Louis Gatte. François Cormier was the first miller of Grand Isle and Francis Violette was the first one at Grand River, Van Buren. The Violette mill was built on Violette Stream which Americans used to call Violet Brook, the old name of Van Buren. Minain Cyr had a mill on Crock River at St. Francis Ledges, and Germain Saucier had one at Chautauqua.

Captain Firmin Thibodeau bought François Cormier's mill at Grand Isle. He made so many alterations that he was able to give white flour to his customers. Captain Régis Thériault did likewise at St. Basile.

The first sawmill in the country was that of Nathan Baker on Baker Brook.

A few citizens had already made a fortune, and Captain Thibodeau, who was known as Lord of Madawaska, was one of them. He had vast farmlands a short distance southeast of Green River. His dwelling, which could compare with the old manors of Normandy, was open to all those who were looking for work as well as to strangers and travelers. He became one of the wealthiest farmers of the Province. In his barns he had 25 cows, 8 horses, 50 sheep, and a larger number of pigs. Since he knew how to read



and write, he was the merchant of his district and the banker of the country.

Other citizens were likewise commercial merchants; such were Jean and Michel Robichaud, Louis Bellefleur, and Simonnet Hébert.

In all the houses, the loom had the place of honor. The young lady who could not weave had scant chances of meeting a well-to-do young man, since possession of this art was a condition of an elegant marriage. A young man who had not cleared 10 acres of farmland was a poor risk for a young lady.

When the day of proposal had come, if the candidate had no dwelling, the father had just to let out the news of an approaching marriage and in no time a frolic was organized and another house went up in the village. Those who gave a helping hand were invited to the wedding.

Whenever a house or a barn burned down, every man gave a hand to rebuild.

Farmers used to lend their agricultural implements, their oxen, and sometimes their Sunday best on certain occasions.

Education was not far ahead. However, there were traveling teachers such as Pierre Duperry, Thomas Costin, and Antoine Joliet who taught each his turn in different localities. For such services, they received board and room with three shillings from each family for the school term. As an aid to education, the government granted from 150 to 200 acres of land to all the districts which kept school for six months in the year.

The first school where one could get a good elementary education was founded in 1817 by Father André Toussaint Lagarde, assistant to Father Marcoux and whom he succeeded as pastor of St. Basile. Father Lagarde changed the old rectory into a school and spent all his leisure time instructing the youth of Madawaska.

Among his pupils of the first academy was the young and unfortunate Prosper Cyr, the first native priest of Madawaska. He went to Montreal to finish his studies at the seminary. His father, Eloi Cyr, his stepmother who was Father Lagarde's sister, his two brothers all drowned in the St. Lawrence on their way to attend the ordination ceremony at Montreal. The newly-ordained priest did not long survive this accident of 1830. He died a few months after the tragedy, and when he died that branch of the Cyr family became extinct as he was the sole survivor.

The population of Madawaska was over 1000 souls in 1820, the year Maine was admitted to the union.



## CHAPTER XI

### FRENCH NAMES IN 1820 WERE "MURDERED" BY CENSUS TAKERS

The Treaty of Gand, 1814, which put an end to the Anglo-American War and which was supposed to settle the question of the boundaries, confused the issue still more and made the frontiers a source of conflicts. New Brunswick and the State of Maine continued to debate the jurisdiction of the contested territory. Lower Canada claimed this territory without however encroaching on the jurisdiction of New Brunswick.

In order to assert its jurisdiction on Madawaska, the United States undertook to take the census in the entire area. According to this census of 1820 we find 1,171 inhabitants, or 148 families, an increase of 500 people since 1808.

New Brunswick, unhappy about this interference in its domain and unwilling to cede this area to its rival, also took a census in 1824. According to this census, there were 1,600 inhabitants, or an increase of 469 inhabitants in four years.

In 1830, the Americans took another census and this time found 2,500 inhabitants. The population had doubled in ten years.

The American census takers murdered some of the French names. On their list Jean Baptiste Cyr is John Betishire. David le Sourd became David Lewsure, nickname of David Cyr. Benjamin Boucher became Barnum Buschiere. For Honoré Levasseur, we read Honerd Lerassus. Anselme Albert is changed into Handsome All Bear.

In his book entitled: "The Acadians of Madawaska", Father Collins notes the poor spelling of French names in the American census of 1820. However, he was fooled by the name of Francis Carney which, as he says "sounds familiar to English ears", but which was the anglicized name of François Cormier.



After the census of 1824 taken by the government of New Brunswick, the colony, which had been left on its own resources for 25 years, became the object of special attention in this Province. Madawaska was annexed to the parish of Kent in York County, which county had as its representative at the legislature one of the most distinguished politicians of Canada, Peter Fisher. He became interested in his new constituents whom he often visited and for whom he obtained many favors from his government.

The War of 1812 had awoken in the territory a military spirit which had a pronounced tendency toward independence. New Brunswick made use of this military spirit to its own advantage by creating military grades and officers among the inhabitants. Social prestige, wealth, and often just the popularity of the candidate were qualifications for a grade of captain.

In the colony there were just two companies under the command of Captains Francis Cyr and Pierre Duperry, but by 1824 the number of officers was increased to five and in 1836 there were eight under the command of Major Peter Fisher. Therefore, the frontiers were to be well-protected.

The Grand River mission, on account of its mounting importance and its distance from St. Basile, requested as early as 1820 a chapel where services could be held every month. For the same reason, Chautauqua, where a great number of immigrants had settled, also wanted a chapel. Chautauqua had a population of 450 whereas Grand River had but 350.

Father Michel Ringuet succeeded Father Lagarde as pastor of St. Basile in 1821, and Father Sirois succeeded Father Ringuet in 1826.

Father Elie Sylvestre Sirois did not wait long before he built a chapel in Chautauqua and one at Grand River, chapels of equal dimensions, that is, 70 feet long by 40 wide. Begun in the summer of 1826, the chapels were ready in the fall. In fact, Chautauqua had its first Mass on January 1, 1827. The construction of a chapel brought not less than 50 new families to Chautauqua.

Father Sirois built another chapel at Tobique for the Malecite Indians and for a few Catholic families in the area. His priestly duties took him as far as Woodstock, N. B. on the St. John River. St. Anne of Fredericton had just been given a resident pastor who was Father J. E. Morisset. Therefore, Father Sirois gave all of his time to his four missions: St. Basile, Van Buren, Frenchville, and Woodstock.

According to the parish census of 1830, St. Basile had a population of 1,395 inhabitants, or 209 homes; Chautauqua had



746 inhabitants, or 112 homes; Grand River had 471 inhabitants, or 107 homes, a grand total of 2,612 inhabitants for all Madawaska.

The inhabitants of Chautauqua were pleased with their chapel, but they did not like the name of the place. Chautauqua had degenerated into "Chatte-à-Coin" (Corner Cat). The people down the river did not miss a chance to tease the respectable citizens of Chautauqua by a play on words, which brought a certain feeling of unfriendliness between the people of upper river and those who lived farther down.

This affair was taking alarming proportions by complex interests of rivalry, and the Chautauqua army, under the command of Captain Romain Michaud, was always on the alert to avenge the honor of the parish on the first provocation, when notables of the town asked Father Sirois to change the name of the place for that of a saint.

Father Sirois addressed a request to the Bishop of Quebec on December 8, 1827 suggesting the name of St. Emily, but since there was no office in the breviary in honor of St. Emily on her feast day, the bishop dedicated the parish to St. Luce (St. Lucy) and gave St. Bruno as patron of Van Buren.

Father Sirois left Madawaska in 1831 to take the parish of St. Stanislaus in the Province of Quebec. He died at St. Barnaby at the age of 83.

Father François Xavier Romuald Mercier, assistant at St. Antoine de Chambly, succeeded Father Sirois at St. Basile. Father Mercier was Acadian. He was the son of Jean Louis Mercier and Elizabeth Landry of St. Roch de l'Achigan in Montcalm County, an area colonized by Acadians on their return from their New England exile. Later on he went to Montreal where he was appointed Canon and Archpriest of the cathedral.

The inhabitants of St. Luce of Frenchville had addressed a petition to the bishop for a resident pastor, but had to wait a few more years. St. Bruno's of Van Buren had the first honor. On account of its geographical location, it had the missions of Aroostook, Tobique, Falls River, and Woodstock.

In the meantime, Father Langevin ministered to the parishioners of Madawaska and Lake Temiscouata. Father Antoine Langevin, born at Beauport, February 7, 1802, was 33 years old upon his arrival at St. Basile where he stayed for 22 years. Bishop Donald McDonald of Charlottetown visited him in 1838 and appointed him Vicar General of his diocese.

Bishop Dollard confirmed this appointment four years later when St. John, N. B. was erected into a diocese. However, on ac-



count of its isolation and difficult communication with St. John, Madawaska remained under the administration of the Bishop of Quebec until 1852, the year Halifax was erected into a diocese.

Father Langevin was a man of superior administrative ability. He was the man chosen by Divine Providence to direct the destinies of Madawaska during the most difficult period of its moving history: The controversy on the frontiers.

He was a man full of energy. He possessed an indefatigable perseverance and had an authoritative character. As long as the uncertain fate of the people continued in regard to the frontiers, he was the arbitrator for this loyal and devoted population. But when the danger had passed, the people became tired of his absolute regime. He did not have the vision to temper his authority to correspond with the new situation. The people filled with bitterness the last years of this priest who had been born to command. The long delay of the settlement of the boundaries, the autocratic ways of the pastor, the energetic vindication of his rights, the ignorance of the majority of the people do not in any way excuse the inhabitants for this lack of respect toward one who had done so much for them. The ten years of stubbornness and savage threats on the part of the people and the domineering attitude of the pastor are not justified and are a black spot in the annals of Madawaska.

The death of the pastor opened the eyes of many who wept more over their own stubbornness than on the one they had lost.

It is through the influence and recommendation of Father Langevin that St. Bruno's of Van Buren obtained a resident pastor. Father Antoine Gosselin, pastor of St. Agnes of Charlevoix, became the first pastor of St. Bruno's. He took up his residence in the fall of 1838. In a letter dated November 18, 1839 to Bishop Signay of Quebec, he wrote that the parish of St. Bruno had 125 Acadian families, and that Tobique had 15 or 20 Indian families. A few miles from Tobique lived 30 or 40 Irish Catholic families.

Encouraged by the success of St. Bruno's parishioners, the inhabitants of St. Luce (Frenchville) did not delay to ask again for a resident pastor. Again Father Langevin, who had but 200 families in his St. Basile Parish, thought it would be to the advantage of the St. Luce parishioners to have a resident pastor. In a letter to Bishop Signay, he mentioned that the parish of St. Luce had a population of 850 with 140 homes. He assured the Bishop that the mission could easily support a pastor.

In July, 1843, Father Henry Dionne, assistant at St. Basile's since 1841, was appointed pastor of St. Luce.

The year 1843 was a year of Jubilee in Madawaska, since that year marked the end of conflicts regarding the question of



frontiers. The year 1843 marked also the fiftieth anniversary of the erection of St. Basile as a parish.

Father Langevin had as hosts at St. Basile's, Bishop Dollard, first Bishop of New Brunswick, the vicar general of Quebec, Monsignor Mailloux, Fathers Charles Chiniquy, Pouliot, Pilote, Hébert of Kamouraska, Malo of St. Joseph of Carleton, Gosselin of Van Buren, and Dionne of Frenchville.

During the two days of the Jubilee, Mass was celebrated in open air on Martin's Hill which dominates the St. John Valley and from the top of which one may get a panorama of Madawaska.

It is from this hill that the young and brilliant Father Chiniquy still deeply attached to the Catholic Church delivered one of the most eloquent orations on the vice of intemperance. His sermon on temperance was so forceful and eloquent that many who were passionately addicted to the vice of drunkardness took the pledge.

Later on, Father Chiniquy abjured the faith of his childhood and priestly life. His prestige fell with his religious apostasy and in that state, he persevered to the end. God alone is his judge. Before men, he passed judgment on himself in his book entitled: "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome". His Protestant sermons which reflected vengeance and calumny did not draw any sect to him. He died irreconciled with the Church which had ordained him and detested by the sects he had tried to befriend.

Under Father Langevin, the colonization of Madawaska was growing rapidly. The districts already settled increased in population, and other districts, with the help of relatives and acquaintances, were also settled without the privations and hard times of the first colonies. Simultaneously, the following settlements were made at the following places: Wallagrass, Eagle Lake, Sacred Heart of Caribou, St. Agatha on Long Lake, St. Jacques, N. B., Green River, Drummond, and St. André.



## CHAPTER XII

### FORESTS OF ST. JOHN VALLEY ONE CAUSE OF AROOSTOOK WAR

A greedy desire for the Yukon gold was the cause of a controversy between England and the United States in regard to the boundaries of Alaska. As much may be said regarding the boundary line between New Brunswick and Maine, not for gold this time, but for the vast and rich forests of pines in the St. John Valley and its upper tributaries.

In the absence of all jurisdiction in this contested territory, many people from everywhere were invading the vast forests in this area for the purpose of cutting the giant pines to float them afterwards to sawmills and maritime warehouses.

The Province of New Brunswick which after the War of Independence had colonized a part of this area soon became aware that the State of Maine was establishing an absolute claim in the territory, especially the right to cut timber. However, New Brunswick had the preponderance over the Pine Tree State until 1827 when Maine came on the scene of conflict.

A series of revolts, provocations, protestations, and counter-proclamations, debates, mobilization and demobilization, in New Brunswick as well as in Maine, brought the United States and England well within a short range of war.

Article 2 of the Versailles Treaty reads thus: "In order to avoid all disputes which might ensue in the future regarding the boundaries of the said United States, it is understood and decreed by these presents that the said boundaries are and shall be as follows:

Starting at the angle northwest of Nova Scotia, that is, from this angle formed by a drawn line in a north direction from the source of the St. Croix River to the plateaus or highlands, and from there along the summit which divides the basin of rivers



which flow into the St. Lawrence River from that of the rivers which flow into the Atlantic Ocean to the higher source northwest of the Connecticut River; from there following the middle of this course of water of 45° degrees north latitude."

The ambiguity of the Versailles Treaty of 1783 which confirmed the independence of America and which settled the boundaries between the colonies of Great Britain and America is responsible for the ensuing conflict. The text of the treaty is not a model of precision, being too obscure in its definitions to be clear in any way.

After much quarreling about the location of the St. Croix River, the question was finally settled, as was told in a former chapter. But what were the highlands which divided the waters that flow into the St. Lawrence and then into the Atlantic, at the top of which highlands a line was to make an angle to meet the northwest source of the Connecticut River?

Americans maintained that this part of the treaty was a reproduction of the Treaty of Paris of 1763 and had been enacted for the purpose of keeping the ancient boundaries of France and England before Canada was ceded to England, and consequently that line from the source of the St. Croix was to take a direction directly north intersecting the St. John River near Grand Falls and keep on in that straight direction to the heights of Notre Dame Mountains, twenty miles from the St. Lawrence mountains, which stipulated by the Treaty of Versailles divide the waters of the Laurentian Basin from those that flow into the Atlantic. From there, the demarcation line was to meet the source of the Connecticut River including not only all Madawaska, but also the middle counties of Rimouski, Temiscouata, Kamouraska, L'Islet, Montmagny and Bellechasse within the boundaries of the United States. This interpretation, no matter how exaggerated it appeared to Canadians and English, conformed more to the terms of the treaty. In 1812, England admitted this interpretation of the treaty but refused to conform to it as a protestation against the United States for other areas which, according to England, it held unjustly.

Later on England maintained that this demarcation line could not be the boundaries meant by the treaty, since Maine would project itself into British America closing the St. John River, its only means of communication between Lower Canada and the Maritime Provinces. England identified the highlands as Mars Hill located twenty miles south of the Aroostook River. From there, the line followed west to the boundaries of Quebec which gave Canada more than half of Aroostook County.

It was within these two contradictory lines that the contested



area happened to be located. Its surface was equally divided between New Brunswick and Maine with about 12,000 square miles of surface. Madawaska then held two-thirds of this surface, all the area north of the Aroostook River to Lake Temiscouata. Since Madawaska was the only part that had been settled, it became the main stage of the war between the two contestants.

In 1817, American citizens, Captain Nathan Baker, John and James Harford with Captain Fletcher came to the St. John River and settled on the Meruimticook River at Baker Brook about 20 miles west of St. Basil. These new settlers came from the Kennebec Valley.

Shortly afterwards came John Baker, Jesse Wheelock, James Bacon, Charles Studson, Barnabas Hannawell, Walter Powers, Daniel Savage, Randall Harford, Nathaniel Bartlett, Augustus Webster, and Amos Maddocks. These came from the Kennebec Valley in Somerset County. Some settled at Baker Brook, while others established a settlement at St. Francis Ledges. These same ones later on took refuge at the fort in Fort Kent in 1839 to defend the American patriots against the Canadian troops. Until the erection of the blockhouse in Fort Kent, the American colony at Baker Brook was the center of the little American Republic in British land.

John Baker, a citizen of the little town of Moscow in Somerset County, had first gone to Gaspesie on Chaleur Bay and from there had come to the St. John River to settle among his relatives on the Meruimticook River. At Baker Brook, he started a commercial lumber enterprise and built big sawmills on Baker Brook. He married Sophie Rice, the widow of his brother, Nathan.

John Baker is the grandfather of Colonel Jesse Wheelock Baker, ex-deputy to the New Brunswick Legislature, and Enoch Baker, manufacturer at Baker Brook.

John Baker, as an American citizen, could not own in his name any land in New Brunswick. He had deeded to a friend in Woodstock, Samuel Nevers, the land on which he had settled. On account of his talent and activity, he soon became the acknowledged chief, the Washington of the American Republic of Madawaska. He began to spread American propaganda that the land he held and all surrounding land belonged to Maine. To legalize his American civil status, he asked the Portland Legislature to deed to him all the land bordering Baker Brook. In 1825, the government of Maine gave him the titles to the land in spite of the protests of New Brunswick.

The New Brunswick government then taxed all foreigners who were residing in the Province and seized all the timber cut by them. This act did not help matters any and irritated General



Baker, as his friends used to call him.

All the American colonists of Aroostook and all those who had American sympathies were convoked at John Baker's residence on July 4, 1827 to celebrate, in a worthy manner, the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the United States, and to sign a declaration of fidelity to the Republic. The Star-Spangled Banner was hoisted in the presence of a multitude who showed their approval with loud noise. The celebration ended with a banquet. The Acadians who had been invited had refused to take part in the demonstration.

Pierre Duperry from time to time kept the officials at Fredericton well informed on the activities of Baker at Meruimticook.

On August 10, the day chosen for the proclamation of the Constitution, Marshal George Morehouse of New Brunswick appeared on the scene at Baker Brook and asked Baker what was the meaning of the flag.

"This is the American flag", replied Baker furiously. "Have you never seen it? In that case you may examine it at your leisure."

On the order given by the magistrate to bring the flag to him, Baker proudly replied: "I'll never do such a thing. We placed it there and it shall stay there. We are in American territory and Great Britain has no jurisdiction here and we will be upheld by our own government".

The British cut down the flagpole and took the flag to Fredericton.

Mrs. Baker, as stubborn as her husband, went to St. Basil to buy cloth to make another flag and had it up again.

In the meantime, Baker and his companions had been accused of revolting against British laws. During the night of September 25, 1827, fourteen policemen seized the capital of Meruimticook and made Baker prisoner. No sooner had they left the waters of Baker Brook, then the flag of independence was fluttering again in the breeze. Mrs. Baker, as a good American, had taken over.

Baker was fined twenty-five louis and was condemned to three months imprisonment. Maine sent a protest to Washington. Henry Clay, the famous Secretary of State wrote to Lincoln, Governor of Maine: "The government of the United States, convinced of the justice of Maine's claim will espouse the cause of John Baker and his companions, if the authorities of New Brunswick refuse to liberate him." Governor Lincoln at once ordered the Governor of New Brunswick to release his subjects arrested on



Maine soil, otherwise American troops will invade the capital of the Province. Baker and his men remained prisoners of the New Brunswick Government until Americans decided to mobilize their troops.

The troops were sent to fortify the town of Houlton and to build the military road to the St. John Valley.



## CHAPTER XIII

### EARLY ATTEMPT TO INCORPORATE MADAWASKA LED TO ARRESTS

From time to time the officials in London and Washington had submitted the question of the boundaries for arbitration to William, King of the Netherlands. The State of Maine protested at once against such a choice of arbitrator who had the reputation of being a vassal of England.

William of Holland admitted that he had been given a hard task. His efforts to solve the problem seem to have been sincere and impartial. On January 10, 1831, he suggested the division of the territory into reasonably equal parts with the St. John River and part of the St. Francis River as definite boundaries. Washington and Fredericton refused to accept that suggestion. However, the two parties promised to abstain from any offensive act during the dispute and New Brunswick continued to exercise its jurisdiction in the contested area.

This compromise had scarcely been concluded between the two capitals when Maine organized the entire south bank of the St. John River. (Maine 1831, Chap. 151, An Act to incorporate the town of Madawaska and other purposes.) The incorporation act provided a division of the territory into electoral districts which would elect representatives and establish a regular system of regional government.

Notice was duly given the inhabitants of the town to meet on August 20, 1831 at Pierre Lizotte's residence to elect the following officers: Moderator, Town Clerk, and Selectmen.

Captain Lizotte advised Walter Powers to whom the mandates had been given that he could not allow such a meeting to take place in his house. Therefore, the meeting in which forty men took part was held in open air. Most of the men were Americans and English-speaking.



Walter Powers read the act incorporating this part of the Madawaska Territory. All those who were elected to office were Americans. Paul Cyr, Romain Michaud, and other French-speaking citizens refused the office of selectmen. In a general way, the French colonists did not take part in the election and showed very little interest in the discussions of the meeting which was under the control of American subjects.

The district had just been organized; all that it needed was representation at the State Legislature.

Captain Lizotte was approached by the leaders of the movement as a possible candidate. He was somewhat disturbed like the rest of his fellowmen, for he had been persuaded by his new friends, the Americans, that all the territory south of the St. John River belonged by right to the United States. He was an honest man who had shown great loyalty to England. For this reason, the Americans who wanted to enlist the support of the French to their cause insisted to get him without, however, getting his consent. The name of Lizotte appeared on the roster with Baker as his opponent.

The election took place on September 12 in Chautouqua (Frenchville) at the residence of Raphael Martin. About 50 citizens; mostly Americans, took part in the election. Captain Lizotte, to his great surprise, was elected by a majority of five votes. Baker received 16.

The Acadian and Canadian citizens who took part in this election were: Raphael Martin, Jean Baptiste Daigle, Joseph Pelletier, Christophe Martin, Hubert Caron, Paul Marquis, Joseph Marquis, Thomas Michaud, Joseph Lagacé, Eloi Labrie, Ferdinand Ouellet, Baptiste Boucher, Baptiste Chassé, and Laurent Daigle.

All the canvassing for Lizotte had been in vain. When the Legislature convened, Lizotte duly elected, wrote to Governor Samuel Smith of Maine that he had protested against his nomination as candidate the preceding September and that he had no intention of pledging allegiance to the United States as he was a British subject and intended to remain so until death.

The English Magistrates, Leonard Coombs of St. Leonards and Francis Rice of Edmundston protested against the meetings held in British territory. New Brunswick wrote a strong protest to Washington against the attitude of Maine in the St. John Valley, recalling the agreement of the two governments which agreed to leave things as arbitrated by William of Holland.

Washington replied that the Federal Government had not authorized Maine to annex any part of the territory. New Bruns-



wick, embolden by this denial, issued an order to arrest all those who had taken part in the meetings held at St. David and at Chautauqua.

At a moment's notice, Sir Archibald Campbell, Governor of New Brunswick and commander-in-chief of the army, the procurator general and the sheriff of York, and James McLaughlin with a troop of soldiers arrived in St. Basile.

On Sunday, September 25, 1831, a meeting was held near the church and Governor Campbell paid a praiseworthy tribute to the French colonists for their loyalty, assuring them the protection of the British government. He alluded to the conduct of a certain number of citizens who had taken part in the election of American officials in a territory still under the jurisdiction of Great Britain. He excused the French-speaking citizens who had been misled by agitators from Maine. He appealed to those present to remain faithful and loyal to the British Crown. Spontaneously, all the inhabitants came forward one by one to present arms to the Governor. Captain Lizotte was one of them.

About this time the Governor of the Province was a guest of Father Romuald Mercier, Pastor of St. Basile's. The next day, the Governor and his party went to St. David to pay a visit to Captain Simon Hébert to learn from local officials what measures should be taken to have English laws respected in the area. It was decided that thirty soldiers be sent to Meruimticook and Chautauqua to arrest all those who had elected a representative to the Portland Legislature.

Baker, the defeated candidate, who had followed the doings of the English from far, had prudently left his home. The Vice-President of the Republic, Mrs. Baker, was all alone to receive the visitors. Four Americans, Daniel Savage, Jesse Wheelock, Dan Been, and Barnabas Hannawell were arrested at once. Mrs. Baker protested loudly against the violation of the home of a citizen of the Republic. Her last words which the soldiers heard as they were leaving with their prisoners were: "The Star-Spangled Banner shall wave in the breeze of Meruimticook".

Thirty Acadians and Canadians did not resist arrestation as they had been promised liberty.

Chief Justice Ward Chipman, who presided at the court, seriously admonished the French prisoners and dismissed them on their promise not to use American propaganda any more. It was not so with the four Americans, Wheelock, Savage, Hannawell, and Been who had to submit to a long questioning on the means they used to seduce the French. They were fined 50 louis and condemned to three months' imprisonment.



Baker went to Portland to advise the State Officials on what was transpiring in the area. Governor Lincoln did not ask any better than to hear that a large number had been taken prisoners. A general alarm of protestations echoed throughout Maine and even reached as far as Washington. Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, assured Maine that the prisoners would be set at liberty. Fredericton, alarmed by these rumors, wanted to free the prisoners without seeming to fear Washington or lose its dignity. Prisoners were told that the London Court had acquitted them.

Washington denied the annexation of Madawaska by the Maine Legislature and promised a million to Maine if it would cede its jurisdiction in the contested area. But Maine had as governor, Enoch Lincoln who would not give in easily when the interests of Maine were at stake. On July 4, 1832, when a big crowd had gathered for the celebration of Independence Day, he proposed a toast in reply to a warning of moderation received from Washington: "To our brethren of Madawaska, too civilized to be sold as slaves. To John Baker and Mrs. Baker, to all my constituents over there, to Wheelock, Bacon, Pierre Lizotte and all his fellowmen, let us drink the good wine of Maine. Let us raise our glasses." While cannons were roaring a chorus of voices shouted from the heights of Portland.

Evidently, Maine did not intend to be dictated by Washington. The state began the construction of the military road between Houlton and the St. John River and encouraged settlements in the Aroostook Valley and in the St. John Valley. Maine went so far as to measure 100 lots of farmland on the north bank of the St. John River to be held for \$5.00 a lot.

In vain did New Brunswick try to stop this invasion of its territory. London and Washington did not hurry to settle the question of the frontiers and all honest effort of colonization was paralysed. The sickening situation lasted until 1837 at which time England and the United States could not come to an agreement.

In 1837, Maine undertook to take another census. The census taker, Ebenezer S. Greeley, was arrested by Warden James A. McLaughlin and taken to Woodstock where the jailer refused the prisoner. Greeley went back to work and this time he was arrested and jailed in Fredericton. Maine asked New Brunswick to set Greeley at liberty. Governor Harvey of Fredericton answered Governor Dunlap of Maine that he had been ordered to prevent any exercise of jurisdiction by a foreign power in the contested territory, even if he should be obliged to have recourse to the military force of British America to enforce this order.



Washington intervened again. S. M. Fox, British Minister in Washington, asked New Brunswick to release Greeley.



## CHAPTER XIV

### AROOSTOOK'S BLOODLESS WAR ENDED IN BOUNDARY SETTLEMENT

During the winter of 1838, the Governor of Maine sent George W. Buckmore as special agent to investigate the quantity of timber cut in the upper St. John Valley. The agent found the forests peopled by laborers. The Legislature of 1839, upon the report of Buckmore, decided to drive out from its domain all the invaders. Rufus McIntyre, land agent, and Major Hasting Strickland, sheriff of Penobscot, proceeded to the area with 200 soldiers.

The American troops had not yet reached the place, when a battalion of the 11th Regiment of Quebec was on its way to Madawaska, and a part of the provincial troops had already proceeded to the Aroostook River.

Governor Harvey at this time paid a visit to Father Langevin at St. Basile. In his letters to London, he constantly pleaded with his government not to abandon the Madawaska people to whom he had pledged the protection of the British Crown.

Shortly after the governor's visit when peace seemed to be assured, an incident occurred which brought back old hatreds. The English Vanguard, made up of the territorial wardens, McLaughlin, Tibbits, and other officers, fell into the power of the Americans who took them as prisoners to Bangor on February 2, 1839. The same month the provincial troops took ten American prisoners on the Aroostook River and led them to Fredericton. Among them were Rufus McIntyre, Colonel Webster, and other officers.

In the St. John Valley, Joseph Nadeau and Jean Baptiste Daigle with their lumberjacks were taken prisoners by the commandant of Fort Kent recently erected at the mouth of the Fish River.

Sir Harvey issued a proclamation in which he vindicated the



rights of his province. Governor Kent of Maine retarded by raising a troop of 10,000 men. The Adjutant General, Isaac Hodgdon, led the soldiers toward Houlton. Governor Harvey drafted as many men as he could find to send them to the frontiers to reenforce the 11th Regiment of the British Forces. Nova Scotia voted a budget of 100,000 Louis and offered its last soldier to repel the invader. Upper and Lower Canada took sides with New Brunswick. From Quebec to Halifax, people were being armed. New England wanted war; however, war had not yet been declared.

As proclamations were issued by both contestants, General Winfield Scott of the United States Federal Army arrived on the scene with a message of peace and the mission of coming to an understanding with the military officials of Canada. Scott and Harvey, who had met as adversaries at Stoney Creek and Lundy's Lane, had always kept a certain esteem of each other. It was agreed that the Aroostook Valley would remain within the jurisdiction of the United States whereas the St. John Valley would continue under the administration of New Brunswick. It was also agreed that they would abstain from any offensive act. The exploitation of the forests was left open to the two countries. Prisoners were then exchanged and the troops returned to their respective capitals. But agreements were not to last.

The Canadian troops had not yet reached Quebec and Halifax when Governor Fairfield of Maine sent a troop to the Aroostook Valley and to the Fish River Valley. Harvey protested and explained the terms of the treaty, but Fairfield replied that he did not want to be bound by the Scott-Harvey agreement and that he intended to keep the Fish River Valley as well as the Aroostook.

Both sides brought back their troops which stayed in the territory until the peace treaty of 1842.

As a result of this, all the timber cut during the winter was not floated down the river in the spring and the lumber operations came to a standstill. The Canadian troops stationed in the area were given the task of building the military road from St. John, N. B. to Rivière-du-Loup in the Province of Quebec and erecting forts at Madawaska and at Ingall on Lake Temiscouata, barracks at St. Rose du Dégelis and at Grand Falls. The Americans on the other hand finished the Aroostook Road leading to Fort Kent.

The most important of Canadian forts was the one in Edmundston. From a height of 150 feet it dominated the St. John and Madawaska Valleys. The stone foundation was 40 by 30 feet and the upper story was a triangular frame. After the fire of 1868, the stones were used for the construction of a dam on the Madawaska River.

The fort at Fort Kent remains to tell the bravery of Maine



citizens during the war of proclamations.

While negotiations were going on in Washington and London, political intrigues were a matter of course in the contested area. Baker appeared on the scene again. At Fort Kent in 1840, he presided at a meeting during which the American flag was hoisted to the top of the fort and the area was declared part of the Republic.

At the date of the treaty, two-thirds of Madawaska was under the control of American troops, all the south bank of the St. John River except the farmland of Simon Hébert of St. David.

Since 1831, England had practically abandoned the south bank of the St. John and had concentrated all its efforts on keeping the north shore.

Although London wanted to avoid any collision with the American Army, Governor Harvey of New Brunswick persistently tried to keep the entire territory of Madawaska. In a letter to the British Minister in Washington, Harvey mentioned that he would not provoke the American troops on condition that they stay away from the north shore of the St. John River.

Father Langevin of St. Basile wrote on June 15, 1841, that the people lived in fear and sometimes in hope as to what will happen regarding the boundary line, and ends, by saying, "Come what may, we prefer war than give one inch of Madawaska to the Americans."

The British cabinet appointed Lord Ashburton to meet Daniel Webster at Washington to settle once and for all the question of the frontiers.

The result of the deliberations between the two men is known as the Webster-Ashburton Treaty signed in Washington, August 9, 1842. The present boundary line between New Brunswick and Maine was settled. It was practically the same line suggested by the King of Holland. By the treaty, 7,000 square miles and 2,000 subjects were ceded to the United States. The St. John River was left open to the two countries, and the colonists who had farm-lands in the territory had to get new deeds from one country or another, depending on what side of the river their land happened to be at the time of the treaty.

Baker who stayed on Canadian soil got used to his new allegiance without however becoming naturalized. He became a prosperous and useful subject with his new fellowmen. He died in 1863 and was buried in a cemetery of his own denomination at St. Francis Ledges. In 1895, his remains were transferred to Fort Fairfield by the State of Maine which wanted to honor its hero.



Captains Hébert, Lizotte, Duperry, Thibodeau, Thériault, and Major Bellefleur were buried in St. Basile's Cemetery.

Captain Francis Violette was buried in St. Bruno's Cemetery, Van Buren, Maine. Captain Romain Michaud rests in peace in St. Lucy's Cemetery, Frenchville, Maine.

The only relic that remains of this period of agitation is the Blockhouse at Fort Kent.

Loyal to its new allegiance, Madawaska, Maine grows and prospers amid an Anglo-Saxon population and the people are proud to be good American subjects.



## CHAPTER XV

### TREATY OF 1842 WAS TURNING POINT IN MADAWASKA HISTORY

The Webster-Ashburton Treaty was the turning point in history for the inhabitants of American Madawaska. They came under the control of another country and as a consequence they did not know how they would get along with their new fellowmen, the Americans. Great was their surprise when they found out in time of peace that their new countrymen were civil and hospitable.

The Puritans had mitigated their characteristics as they did not have to be on the defensive regarding their creed. They had one aim and that was to develop their country and make it prosperous. They wanted liberty of conscience for themselves and wanted it also for those who would respect theirs.

The new Americans adapted themselves very well to their new life under a new allegiance and ended by adopting the manners of their new fellowmen to pass them afterwards to their brethren across the St. John River who were deprived of the Pan American civilization. For half a century afterwards, many French Canadians got a longing for the States and migrated to the great industrial centers of New England.

Maine developed very rapidly. Its population increased from 96,000 in 1790 to 501,000 in 1840, of which 9,000 lived in Aroostook County. After a part of the Madawaska Territory had been annexed to Aroostook County in Maine, three regional districts or plantations were created: Van Buren, Madawaska, and Fort Kent, with Houlton as the county seat of Aroostook.

The first duty of Maine was to acquaint its new subjects with the constitution of the state. James Madigan, an Irish Catholic, who had a good education and who knew French, was sent to the St. John Valley as civil missionary. He held meetings and



gave lectures on district administration, the Constitution of the United States and American civil government. During his first years in Madawaska he held several positions, such as postmaster, teacher, collector of taxes, and justice of the peace for the entire area. As soon as the different places produced qualified citizens to take over some of those duties, he was glad to let them administer their own affairs. Each town was dotted with one or several schools, a post office, and an office for the justice of the peace.

The first Register of Deeds in the district was Louis Cormier of Grand Isle, who held that position for many years.

During the summer of 1844, a committee from Maine and Massachusetts came to Madawaska to give the deeds and titles to those who owned any property. All grants made by the New Brunswick Government were recognized and other districts were opened to colonization. The committee came back in 1854 for the same purpose.

New Brunswick on the other hand became interested in the welfare of the inhabitants who were living on the north bank of the St. John River, and did pretty much the same work as had been done by the American officials.

The report given by the committee shows the good will of the people. All the colonists were satisfied with the boundaries of their farmlands as well as their property titles. "The people," stated the report, "is prosperous, loyal, and relatively happy. It appears that their loyalty to the British Crown in the past is a good sign of their future loyalty toward the laws and institutions of the republic."

The committeeman from New Brunswick likewise made a report to his government and stated that the colony of Canadian Madawaska had been completely neglected. On this report, New Brunswick went to work to do something for that part of Madawaska. The bridge over the Madawaska River in Edmundston, begun in 1837, was completed in 1847. At Grand Falls, a suspended bridge was erected in 1851. Six years later it fell down, but was rebuilt in 1860.

The highway between Grand Falls and Edmundston was completed about this time, for it is reported that in 1856 the Governor of New Brunswick, Sir Edmund Walker Head, came from Fredericton to Edmundston by the highway. At St. Basile, Governor and Lady Head were guests of Father Langevin, and people were invited to the rectory for a social in honor of the distinguished guests.

It was to honor this visit of Sir Edmund Head that a few ci-



tizens of the place called their little village Edmundston which has since become the seat of Madawaska County.

In 1860, the Prince of Wales, who later became Edward VII, also visited Canadian Madawaska. This was a great event for all the people of the area. An address was read in English and then Honoré Bossé was invited to pay homage in the name of his French countrymen.

It is during the period following the treaty of 1842 that more colonists went to Van Buren and Frenchville, Maine and to St. Hilaire and St. Francis Ledges, New Brunswick. Eagle Lake and St. Agatha, Maine and St. André, Drummond, and Baker Lake, New Brunswick were getting enough settlers to have parishes established.

In 1846, Madawaska was called upon to elect a representative to the Maine Legislature. Joseph D. Cyr, wealthy Van Buren farmer, was elected. His immediate successors were Francis Thibodeau, Paul Cyr, Joseph Nadeau, and Firmin Cyr.

The first representatives of Canadian Madawaska to the Fredericton Legislature were Francis Rice of Edmundston and Charles Watters of Grand Falls.

In 1850, the population of Canadian Madawaska was 3434, whereas American Madawaska had 3000 inhabitants. Ten years later, in 1860, the population had increased to 5000 and 3500 respectively. All in all there were 8500 inhabitants on both sides of the St. John River. The entire region was prosperous. The use of the forests brought wealth by furnishing employment to the lumberjacks and a market for farm products.

In the fall, heavy flat boats full of food supplies were drawn by horses to the lumber camps in the forests. All the men who were not needed at home went to the woods to cut logs and float them afterwards on the rivers.

Agriculture became more and more satisfactory by bringing an annual revenue to the region. Agricultural implements made the art easier and more economical. The only motors on the farms were windmills.

In 1850, there were twenty schoolhouses in the area. Five post offices from Grand Falls to the St. Francis River were at different locations on the highway. There were four on the American side. The mail carrier used horse and buggy to deliver his mail. Upon his arrival at the post office, he would blow his bugle to let the people know that he had arrived. Wherever he went he could find a lodging place and through him the people got all the news and gossip of the region.



Newspapers were scarce at this time and were a luxury. Post-masters and school teachers were the only ones who received "La Gazette de Quebec" or "Le Canadien", which were afterwards circulated among the people of the district.

After the settlement of the boundary line, Lower Canada wanted a share of the Madawaska Territory which had not been ceded to the United States, including part of Victoria and Restigouche Counties to Dalhousie on Chaleur Bay. Later on it limited these pretensions to Grand Falls, and finally to Madawaska River.

New Brunswick on the other hand claimed all the territory south of Notre Dame Mountains to the head of Chaleur Bay, that is, the entire Temiscouata Valley and part of Bonaventure County.

The people in that area wanted to stay in New Brunswick. London appointed a commission to end the controversy. The first arbitration was favorable to New Brunswick, but Quebec protested so loudly that another commission had to be appointed. This time Doctor Travers Twiss, representative of New Brunswick, and Thomas Falconer, lawyer from Quebec, and Judge Stephen Lushington from London were appointed. The new boundaries on the Canadian side were fixed 12 miles north of the St. John River and from Madawaska River to the St. Francis River opposite the Town of St. Francis, Maine.

The entire Madawaska Territory was therefore divided among three contestants: New Brunswick, Quebec and Maine.

After the treaty of 1842, American Madawaska remained under the jurisdiction of the Bishops in the Maritime Provinces. New Brunswick was erected into a diocese in 1843 with Bishop Dollard as head of the Fredericton See. The inhabitants did not delay long in demanding a separation from the diocese of New Brunswick to become subjects of the Boston Diocese. Several reasons were given to effect a change: The political division of the Madawaska Territory; the difficult crossing of the St. John River for several months in the year; the hope of getting a resident pastor under another administration; the discount demanded on American bank notes by New Brunswick; the fact that Father Langevin of St. Basil, New Brunswick refused to Maine civil officials all statistics on births, marriages, and deaths of Catholics ministered by him.

These grievances originated at the Mission of Our Lady of Mount Carmel situated between St. David and Grand Isle, Maine almost opposite St. Basil, New Brunswick. Father Langevin kept on ministering to the religious needs of the new Americans. His



successor was Father Hugh McGuirk who was more successful than his predecessor as having been acceptable to the people.

Bishop Fenwick of Boston, while on a visit to the St. John Valley in 1846, had located the site of a future chapel, and his successor, Bishop Fitzpatrick, two years later, July 16, 1848, dedicated the chapel to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The people then began the propaganda of complete separation from New Brunswick to belong to an American diocese. All the parishes on the American side formed an association for this purpose, an association known as "The Aroostook Catholic Association" which launched a vigorous campaign. Receiving little encouragement from the Bishops of Halifax and St. John in whom Father Langevin had strong supporters, they addressed a petition to Boston where The Boston Pilot, a Catholic newspaper, gave them all the support they wanted.

The inhabitants also sent a petition to the Maine Legislature which sent it to the proper religious authorities.

In 1860, Bishop Rogers of Chatham, New Brunswick was authorized by Rome to report on the religious question of Madawaska. As a result, Bishop Rogers administered American Madawaska which remained by right under the jurisdiction of the St. John Bishop. This arrangement was agreeable to the bishops of New Brunswick but did not help the situation. Therefore, the American Madawaskans addressed a petition to Pope Pius IX on November 2, 1864. There were 1018 signatures.

By a decree of the Propaganda at Rome signed by Cardinal Barnado August 16, 1870 American Madawaska came under the jurisdiction of the Most Reverend David W. Bacon, the first Bishop of Portland, Maine.

Two months after the promulgation of the decree, Bishop Bacon officially visited Madawaska where he was greeted by acclamation of the people who had gone to meet him at the Aroostook River to escort him afterwards to Madawaska.

This separation as a logical consequence of the political division of the territory was negotiated in Rome by Bishops Rogers, Sweeney, and Bacon who favored the separation.

The joy manifested by the people of Mount Carmel was not to last. The parishioners of St. Bruno's Church, Van Buren, Maine having decided to move their church and rectory from the Grand River site to the site of the present church near Violet Brook, Mount Carmel's chapel did not as a consequence answer the needs of the people and was abandoned completely when the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel at Lille in Grand Isle was built in 1876. A cross marks the site of the old cemetery of Mount



## Carmel between Grand Isle and St. David of Madawaska.

The last years of Father Langevin's ministry were marked by the disagreement of the people of Mont-Carmel. The attitude of these colonists he had served for so many years greatly disappointed him. He died in April, 1857 at the age of 55. In his last will, he gave the greater part of his meager fortune to the college of "Sainte-Anne de la Pocatière" for the education of the colonies' young men. He deeded the land he had bought from Major Bellefleur in St. Basile to Msgr. Connolly for a convent. St. Basile is indebted to him for the foundation, plans, and material of a church as well as the first convent.

Father McKeagney, who was Father Langevin's assistant in St. Basile, became the second pastor in Van Buren. He succeeded Father Gosselin who had been pastor for fourteen years.

In St. Luce, Father Dionne came as pastor. During his administration, churches were built in St. Francis Ledges, St. Joseph of Wallagrass, and St. Louis of Fort Kent. In Fort Kent, the church was not finished when Father Dionne became sick and had to retire. He died in Kamouraska in 1861.

Father Charles Sweron of Belgium came to the Madawaska territory as missionary under the jurisdiction of Bishop Sweeney of St. John. He was given the parish of St. Francis Ledges where he stayed for three years. He then succeeded Father Dionne in St. Luce from 1859 until his death in 1908. For half a century this saintly man ministered to the needs of the Acadian people from St. Francis to Van Buren.



## CHAPTER XVI

### PERIOD OF PROGRESS

After the death of Father Langevin, Father Mc Guirk succeeded him as pastor of St. Basile. During his twelve years in the parish, he finished the church whose construction was begun by his predecessor, enlarged the convent, and invited a religious order of nuns to teach in the area, but they stayed just a short time.

Up to 1869 all the parishes of the Madawaska territory on both sides of the St. John River were a part of the diocese of Chatham. On his first visit to the area in 1860, Msgr. Rogers, Bishop of Chatham, found this part of his new diocese completely disorganized, not having enough priests for all the needs of the colonies. He made this report to the Propagation of the Faith from whom he was receiving substantial resources to help the territory. The young and hard-working bishop was especially interested in the parishes of the upper St. John. It was during his first years as bishop that the parishes of St. Leonard, St. Anne, Edmundston, St. Jacques, St. Hilaire, Clair and Baker Brook were founded and provided with missionaries.

Bishop Rogers was also interested in the children's education. He invited the Holy Cross Fathers to come to the new colony, hoping they would open a secondary school. The Fathers came, took charge of the parish and a few surrounding parishes in the region, studied the problems, but found that the Madawaska colonies were not developed enough and were financially incapable of maintaining a classical college. They left four years later and accepted the invitation of Bishop Sweeney of St. John, N. B. to open a college in Memramcook near Moncton. There they were provided living quarters by the pastor, Father Lafrance. The college opened in the fall of 1864.

Father Lefebvre, often referred to as the "Apostle of the Acadians", visited the Madawaska county, encouraging the young



men to continue their education in Memramcook. After the inauguration of the Intercolonial railroad from St. Leonard, N. B. to Campbellton, N. B., quite a few boys from Madawaska attended school in Memramcook.

Several unsuccessful attempts were made to interest different religious orders to establish an academy in the region. Then, in October, 1873, four "Hospitalières de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal" arrived in St. Basile at the request of Bishop Rogers. In November there were seven nuns with Rev. Mother Davignon as their superior. Four months later, Mother Davignon died and was succeeded by Mother Quesnal. Classes and the hospital opened that same year. In the original group, one of the nuns most remembered is Sister Maillet. In 1880 she became the superior. Under her leadership, marked by her faithful devotion, perseverance, and dedication for a quarter of a century, the St. Basile convent and hospital were a blessing for all the region.

In the meantime, Father Barry, pastor of St. Basile, left the Madawaska region to take charge of the parish of Caraquet. Father Louis-Napoleon Dugal, his assistant, succeeded him at St. Basile. He became the spiritual director of the little community.

During this period, the Maine Acadians were making great strides in the field of education. At the request of the people of Fort Kent with their representative Major Dickey, the Madawaska Training School was established by the Legislature of 1878. The purpose of this school was to train persons to teach in the common schools of the territory. For nineteen years the school was fortunate in having as the first principal Mr. Vital Cyr, a graduate of the University of Maine. Although he was born in Madawaska, he was considered a native of Fort Kent. Mr. Cyr died in September, 1897 when he was only 50 years old. Miss Mary Nowland, assistant instructor, succeeded him as principal until her retirement in June, 1926.

Being a State School, the program was in English, with very little French being taught. Therefore, the project of establishing a classical college in the valley where both French and English would be taught was not abandoned. Msgr. Healey, Bishop of Portland, invited the Marist Fathers to build such a school in Van Buren. The following year, in 1884, the Marists were in charge of St. Bruno's parish with Father Artaud as the first pastor. Two years later, construction had begun and St. Mary's College opened in 1887 with 35 students.

In 1891, the Good Shepherd Sisters of Quebec came to Van Buren to teach in the public school. After living in temporary quarters, they moved into a convent of their own in 1902.



In Wallaglass, Father Marcoux founded a convent for the "Petites Soeurs Franciscaines de Marie" from Baie St. Paul, P. Q. This same religious order opened a hospital in Eagle Lake in 1905.

In 1898, the Holy Rosary Sisters of Rimouski, P. Q. came to St. Luce to live and teach in the convent-school provided for them by Father Sweron.

Three more convents were founded in the region by still another religious order, the Daughters of Wisdom. These were at St. Agatha, Grand Isle (Lille), and Edmundston, N. B. In St. Agatha, besides the academy, the Sisters maintained a hospital with the most modern equipment. The parish of St. Agatha, founded in 1889 was one of the most prosperous of the area.

Besides these convent schools, many public schools were built and districts were formed as the population increased. These one- and two-room rural schools dotted the countryside for many years. Those students who wanted to further their education could attend the Madawaska Training School in Fort Kent or St. Mary's College in Van Buren.

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Due to the lack of communication and adequate transportation, the Madawaska territory remained isolated and comparatively unknown outside of the valley for over a century. With the advent of the railroads, the area began to emerge from obscurity. Prior to the coming of the railroad, timber, the mainstay of the area's economy, was cut and had to be floated down the St. John River to Provincial seaports at St. John, Fredericton, and St. Andrews, where it was manufactured into finished products and shipped to American and world markets. In New Brunswick, the Canadian Pacific Railroad reached Edmundston in 1878. This railroad provided a direct route to Canadian markets and seaports. Linked to the Maine Central and Boston & Maine lines, it also provided an indirect route to American markets. In Maine, the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad reached Southern Aroostook and Fort Kent in 1895. The Van Buren extension to that line was built a few years later, largely through the efforts of the Honorable Peter Charles Keegan of Van Buren. The extension from Van Buren to Fort Kent and St. Francis was completed in 1909. This direct route to the Boston markets revolutionized the economy of the American side of the St. John River, resulting in the rapid expansion of the area's agriculture, the building of large pulp and lumber mills, and the founding of banks in Fort Kent and Van Buren to serve these new business needs.

A separate economy was flourishing on each side of the border between Maine and New Brunswick. The St. John River,



which separated these people of common ancestry, was finally spanned by an international bridge between Van Buren and St. Leonard in 1911. Ten years later, another bridge was built between Modawaska and Edmundston. A great deal of credit for the realization of this project must be given to Sen. Patrick Therriault who worked for the people of Maine, and to Mr. Pius Michaud, deputy in Ottawa, in obtaining funds from their respective governments. Subsequently, a third bridge was built, which linked the towns of Fort Kent and Clair and strengthened the social and economic ties of these people.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the descendants of the poor but hardy Acadian refugees who had struggled to survive in the wilderness, were taking their place in society as businessmen, doctors, lawyers, educators, and servants of the Church, as well as the industrious farmers and woodsmen. Proudly retaining their ancestors' religion, language, customs, and traditions, they were beginning to prosper and were well on their way to becoming an important part of the American and Canadian scene.

1947. 11. 15. 10:00



**LAWRENCE A. VIOLETTE,  
FORMER SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
MADAWASKA, MAINE**

Lawrence A. Violette was born in a little house on the bank of Violette Brook in Van Buren, Maine, on January 19, 1902, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Joseph F. Violette. His mother's maiden name was Catherine Cyr, daughter of Hilarion Cyr. The little house was demolished to make place for a more pretentious dwelling. His genealogy on the Violette side beginning with his father is as follows: Joseph, Frederick, Bélonie, Francis, — a genealogy which begins in 1755, the date of the expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia. His parents were ushered by the English soldiers to the boats waiting for the Acadians to be deported and Francis was left behind. Legend has it that he could not speak French but spoke English only and since he was too young, he could not pronounce his name. It is the parish priest who found him afterwards who gave him the name of Violette. It is this same Francis who established a grist mill on the north

• The following is a list of some of the more common types of valves.

shore of the St. John River and a few years afterwards moved his mill on Violette Brook in Van Buren. His descendants have been millers up to the present generation.

Mr. Violette attended the Good Shepherd Convent and St. Mary's College in Van Buren up to 1918 at which time he asked admission to the little seminary of the Marist Fathers and attended their schools in different localities as follows: Marist Seminary, Washington, D. C.; St. Mary's Manor, South Langhorne, Pennsylvania; Our Lady of the Elms, Prince Bay, Staten Island, New York; Marist College, Washington, D. C. He graduated in 1925 from the School of Philosophy, Marist College, Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. He traveled in France, Belgium, and Luxemburg and while in Europe he attended the School of Theology at Differt par Messancy in Belgium for half a year then returned to Washington, D. C. to complete his first year of Theology.

He returned to Van Buren in 1926 and in January, 1927, he was hired to teach Grade 5 at the newly constructed Evangeline School in Madawaska. The following year, a junior high department was inaugurated and Mr. Violette was elected teacher of Grades 8 and 9 and principal of the Junior High School. In 1929, the first two years of high school work were offered and he was elected to teach Grades 9 and 10. He was the first high school teacher in Madawaska.

During his twenty-five years in education, he taught in schools in Madawaska, Fort Kent and St. Francis. In 1946 he was elected Superintendent of School Union 127, which comprised the towns of Madawaska, Frenchville, and St. Agatha. He held this position until his death in September, 1952.

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